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ABSTRACT

Part 2 of this Australian newsletter from the National Clearinghouse on the Transition from School to Work contains 11 review papers offering perspectives from various authors on a youth policy. The first two papers, "Youth Policies" by Shears and Matthews and "Putting Youth into Youth Policy" by Clohesy, provide an overview of the issues and the essential elements of a youth policy. In paper 3, "Measuring the Status of Youth," Sweet makes a further contribution to the work he has already done to describe the situation of teenagers in the labor market. In this paper, he argues the need for an adequate statistical index of youth in difficulty. In the fourth paper, "Some Psychological Effects of Unemployment in School Leavers," Tiggemann and Winefield report some preliminary results from their longitudinal study, indicating the effects of employment and unemployment on young people. The next two papers, "Perspectives on a Youth Policy: A View from Education" (Hughes) and "Higher Education and Youth Policy" Anderson, reflect on the relationship between a broad youth policy and secondary and higher education. "Financial Incentives for Teenagers" (Ironmonger), "A Youth Allowance" (Edwards), and "Beyond the Refuge: Income Support and Public Housing" (McDermott) all deal in some detail with the financial implications and issues of a youth allowance. Baker, in "Rhetoric is Fine...But Delivery is Another Thing," points out that many inconsistencies exist as far as the formulation of policy and its delivery in services are concerned. In the last paper, Blakers partially sums up the themes of the preceding papers and offers some views of her own on a youth policy.(KC)

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NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL

Newsletter

PART 2

Vol. 2 No. 3 August 1983

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NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL

REVIEW PAPER NO. 9

PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH POLICY

A series of papers by different authors

August 1983

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Towards a Youth Policy

There has built up during the last few years a considerable interest in and a growing pressure for a comprehensive youth policy, and a great many versions of such a policy have been formulated by government and non-government organisations. In most cases, these have been fairly general in their outlines. The article by Denis Davis in the Clearinghouse Review Paper No. 8 (May 1983) indicated the range and complexity of the issues involved. The commitment of the present federal government to the exploration of what is involved in a youth policy has begun to generate - both within and outside government - more detailed examination of some of the implications and of the costs.

This series of papers is a contribution to this examination. The first two papers, by Shears and Matthews and by Clohesy, provide an overview of the issues and the essential elements of a youth policy. Sweet, in Paper 3, makes a further valuable contribution to the work he has already done to describe the situation of teenagers in the labour market. In this paper, he argues the need for an adequate statistical index of youth in difficulty. In the fourth paper, Tiggemann and Winefield report some further results from their longitudinal study, indicating the effects of employment and unemployment on young people.

Papers 5 and 6 by Hughes and Anderson provide perspectives on the roles of secondary and tertiary education as components of a youth policy. The next three papers, by Irongmonger, Edwards and McDermott, deal in some detail with the financial implications and issues of a youth allowance. Baker, in the tenth paper, points out that there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip' as far as the formulation of policy and its delivery in services are concerned.

Blakers, in Paper 11, uses the excuse of a partial summing up of themes to elaborate some views of her own.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AVCC	Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
CAE	Colleges of Advanced Education
CEP	Community Employment Program
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
CRAFT	Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-time Training
CTEC	Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission
CYSS	Commonwealth Youth Support Scheme
DSS	Department of Social Security
EEC	European Economic Community
EPUY	Education Program for Unemployed Youth
ETP	Experimental Training Program
NYCH	National Youth Coalition for Housing
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAS	Secondary Assistance Scheme
SES	Socio-economic Status
SYETP	Special Youth Employment Training Program
TEAS	Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme
UB	Unemployment Benefit
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation
YACA	Youth Affairs Council of Australia
YSS	Youth Services Scheme

YOUTH POLICIES

by

L.W. Shears * and *J.K. Matthews* **

The Shears/Matthews report (Abstract 83/AB:67) is the result of interviews conducted with over 120 people in eleven countries and the Australian States, and of a close survey of relevant research material. These investigations showed that the definition of youth varies in different countries, but in most cases covers the years from the end of compulsory schooling to the age of 19, or in some cases the mid-20s. There is a worldwide recognition that this age group constitutes a community of interest whose needs require specific attention.

Almost all countries acknowledge youth unemployment as a major national concern. Worldwide recession, coupled with longer term economic and social changes, has meant that the traditional means of transition to adulthood by entry into a career structure in the workforce is no longer an option for many young people, and this has in many cases lead to a re-assessment of provision for this age group.

Unemployment in the 15-19 age group is higher in Australia than in any of the countries visited except for the U.K., and, in the 15-25 age group, ranks only behind the U.S.A. and the U.K. Coinciding with this high level of unemployment has been a decline in the participation rates of young people in schooling and higher education between 1975/1976 and 1981/1982. This has been offset partly by participation in TAFE, which has become a major component in the educational activities of young people, but has shown signs of reversal in 1983 as the labour market deteriorated even more sharply.

As a result of these trends, the functional areas which have received most attention are education, training and employment, and in fact definitions of a comprehensive youth policy are more and more being attached to provision in these areas. This may be too restrictive. The central question for youth policy is how to provide a framework of policy and action within which 15-19 year olds will be enabled to participate effectively in society, use their time constructively, explore and develop social relationships, and achieve a successful transition into the workforce and into adult roles generally. Certainly, provisions for education, training and employment are central to this question, but activities in a wide range of other areas are also of direct relevance.

Young people are at a crucial and vulnerable stage of their development and require information, counselling and support services in a number of areas, including health and human relationships. Opportunities to put their energies to use in constructive social and recreational activities are also important in countering apathy, poor self-concept and destructive behaviour. With the deterioration of the economy and the growth in unemployment over the last few years, youth accommodation and the extent

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of homelessness amongst young people have emerged as further problems which raise fundamental issues for youth policy. Anomalies in the legal status and rights of youth and the ages at which they are assumed to become independent persons responsible for their own actions will also need to be addressed if provision for them in a range of areas including training, education, employment and income support is to be effective and appropriate. Above all, young people need to be seen as responsible members of society and to have avenues for effective participation in the making of decisions which affect them.

To be fully comprehensive, a youth policy should deal with every aspect of society which affects young people in major ways. In Australia there is no such comprehensive national statement of what constitutes the 'youth' age group, its needs, problems, and responsibilities, and what operational objectives are appropriate to meet them. While federal, State and voluntary agencies have initiated worthwhile action in a number of areas, and have begun to move towards the development of comprehensive policies, there are as yet few concrete results in terms of the co-ordination of services and the framework within which they are provided.

A number of criticisms have been made of government programs for the education and training of youth and the enhancement of their employment prospects. These programs, which include EPUY, SYETP, CRAFT, and the Transition Scheme, tend to be discrete and isolated and lacking in clear objectives and training rationale. They fail to address the problems of structural change in industry and the labour market, and to provide a comprehensive set of options for all young people. The diversity of schemes for financial assistance for young people in relation to education, training and unemployment relief has led to anomalies in provision for different individuals and has not been conducive to the formation of effective links between education, training and employment. As well, schemes for the social support of young people are not effectively linked with programs in other areas. In several regions of Victoria, structures have been developed for the co-ordination of efforts across functional areas and the integration of resources from different programs to make more effective provision. However, the ad hoc nature of federal and State initiatives and the separate requirements of the funding departments at State and Federal levels have made these attempts very difficult.

To increase retention rates in educational institutions is stated as a major goal of government policy, and has begun to occur naturally in 1983 as the youth employment situation deteriorates further. However, the nature of educational provision for the post-compulsory age group requires some examination if participation in education is to become the major form of activity for the majority of 15-19 year olds. Large groups of young people have demonstrated disaffection with the institutional context of secondary schooling in which they are accorded the status of non-autonomous minors, do not achieve success or recognition, and may not find curricula to suit their needs. Increased participation in TAFE highlights these problems and blurs the distinction between secondary and post-secondary education. The institutional context and curriculum offerings of post-compulsory education as a whole are in need of review, and these must be more effectively linked with training and employment policies and the wider needs of young people in their transition to adulthood if they are to adequately serve their needs.

The report makes twenty-seven recommendations on all aspects of

policy relating to youth and on their co-ordination to provide an effective framework for action. A major recommendation is that policy at federal, State and regional levels be co-ordinated by the establishment of inter-related co-ordinating committees transcending the boundaries of the various departments and agencies responsible for isolated functions relating to youth. It could start with a Prime Minister to Premier invitation calling together delegations of responsible Ministers, officers and representatives of agencies from each of the States and Territories to a 'national summit' on youth and the subsequent establishment of a National Committee on Youth Policy. The purpose of the Committee would be to outline a national-state program to cover all aspects of the needs of youth.

The next stage would be the establishment of similar across-functional State and regional committees including all State government departments with a functioning interest in youth, and youth agencies themselves. State committees would include the representatives to the National Committee and would then reflect national, State and local needs. Given the establishment of national, State and regional objectives, Offices of Youth Affairs, located in host government departments for administrative convenience, could service the national and State committees without the domination of any particular department and the consequent problem of unbalanced programs.

An immediate task of the National Committee would be to establish a national inquiry into all existing youth assistance schemes with a view to replacing the present array of unco-ordinated financial support schemes with a logical and coherent basic youth grant and means-tested youth allowance.

A further task for national and State committees would be to review the structure and curriculum of education for all 15-19 year olds to ensure a comprehensive approach to the educational and training needs of the age group. Further to this review of educational and training structures would be the establishment of new style Youth Complexes for 15-19 year olds, where possible from existing institutions, which would not only be the basic unit for provision of high quality education and training options, but would also provide services in other areas of vital importance to young people such as guidance and counselling in relation to legal matters, finance, accommodation, health and human relationships, and social and recreational provision. Such Youth Complexes would remain open from early morning to late at night and be staffed not only by teachers, but also by guidance officers, welfare officers, legal advisors, housing experts, medical officers and social and recreational workers. A set of experimental Youth Complexes could be established as pilot projects in existing buildings in a range of city and provincial areas in each State.

Another immediate task would be to examine procedures to replace the present separate and unconnected programs for education, training and work with a co-ordinated program planned in conjunction by educational authorities, employers in industry and commerce, trade unions and youth agencies, which would provide a comprehensive range of options for education, training and work experience available to all young people. Of particular importance in this context would be a re-examination of the length, terms and conditions and suitability of the present apprenticeship system with a view to its replacement by a combination of vocational and

on-the-job training in a wider range of occupational areas and a more intensive and shorter period for basic qualification.

Other matters to which the national, State and regional committees should give immediate attention include the need for a review of anomalies in the legal position of young people in educational institutions, the workplace, the family and society as a whole, the need for young people to be viewed as responsible members of society and to be represented on policy-making bodies, and the ever-increasing problem of homelessness.

Since the release of this report, governments have begun to initiate action in some of the areas recommended. It is hoped that this current attention to policies relating to youth will lead to major improvements in the opportunities offered to the young people of this nation.

* * * * *

PUTTING YOUTH INTO YOUTH POLICY

by

*Michael Clohesy**

> Youth policy is a component of social policy. It is an ongoing process by which a community confronts the problem of creating a better world for its young people; better, not just in a material sense nor as a promised future, but as an immediate attempt to overcome the exclusion and domination of young people by the rest of the community.[1]

Three values have traditionally summed up Australian aspirations. These are fairness, justice and progress. Analysis of Australian society in the past, current statistics and future indicators all show that these values have little meaning to the substantial proportion of young people. The 'land of the fair go' is not their land. To reduce this gap between philosophy and outcomes will require major social changes. These will flow from the more closely defined social values outlined below.

Values and Objectives

Equality means one per cent of the people having one per cent of the resources. Justice means an equal distribution of power. Progress should be redefined as development, with development meaning: the creation of conditions which ensure that all people, wherever they are or whoever they be, achieve their fullest potential. Our objective is to achieve outcomes in line with these values in the present, not as some far off future.

This approach has fundamental implications for the way in which young people as a group are currently viewed. Young people are seen as 'in transition', as preparing for the 'real thing'. Youth is seen as a period in which one prepares to realise one's aspirations at a future period. As indicated above, the aspirations are not realised. For many they never were; in current circumstances, for vast numbers they never will be. We must therefore strive to ensure equality, justice and development for young people in the here and now. Short-term programs which seek to 'mind' young people must be seen for what they are. This does not devalue the programs totally, nor does it pretend there are easy solutions. The solutions will emerge however only if we ask the right questions and if we have the courage to try dramatically new initiatives.

* Executive Director, Youth Affairs Council of Australia

** This paper is largely based on a Policy Overview discussion paper which forms part of a youth policy report soon to be released by YACA. The author thanks his colleagues in the YACA Secretariat with whom he jointly wrote the Overview paper.

Building a society which genuinely achieves outcomes consistent with these values involves a continuing process of action and reflection. These are at present seen as discrete activities - thinkers and doers are separated. Australian society tends to have little regard for reflection, preferring to 'get on with the job'. 'The job' will only be effective if we develop tools for analysis and use them.

As with values and objectives, analysis must be about the fundamental questions. Who is gaining what share of the resources? Are we distributing resources equally? Where is power located? How can it be diffused or shared? What indicators will tell us whether development is being achieved.

The Issues

Building on this base, youth policy must encompass all the issues which affect young people. It must recognise that, increasingly, young people from a variety of situations are expressing concern about the issue Who am I? The search for values and purpose is more and more difficult. Other issues include: Arts, Economy, Education, Employment, Environment, Health, Housing, Human Relationships, Income Security, International Affairs, Law, Recreation and Leisure, Road Safety, Transport and Welfare. In each of these areas, standards must be set which are at an acceptable level for young people. The clear interrelationships between all these issues must be addressed.

The needs of particular groups of young people must be taken into account. These include: Aborigines, ethnic communities, the disabled, the rural and isolated, young women, young 'gay' people.

As a comprehensive statement of directions for young people in Australia, youth policy must include:

- provision for youth at local, regional, State and national levels
- provision for youth by all functional areas of government
- provision for youth by government, community and private sectors
- an international context.

There is a current tendency to talk of 'youth policies' rather than 'youth policy'. In the light of the above, this is acceptable provided that an integrated approach is still being pursued.

The reason for stressing this integrated approach is that many of the issues are inextricably linked. For instance, concerns about identity, self-esteem and income are the basis of many health problems. They also help to explain the high level of road accidents. The issues of education, employment, income, accommodation and transport are inextricably linked; and they have to be related back to views of the rights of young people and their desired position in society.

Examining the linkages between issues enables an understanding of the more serious underlying concerns which cross and link issue boundaries, and which must be addressed in any formation of policy. These underlying concerns are the processes which perpetuate inequalities and injustice

in society, and which exclude specific groups from participation in society. As indicated before, the differences between young people of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, culture, physical characteristics and location must be recognised. The significance of these differences however does not lie in the personal differences which they reflect. It lies rather in the structural outcomes which flow from the exploitation of these differences which perpetuate social inequality.

The 'real' issues, therefore, are the underlying concerns which arise from society's economic and value bases and which affect individuals and groups, producing particular disadvantages for some. From an examination of the least powerful or most disadvantaged, the contradictions of public and private policies, in practice, become evident and we can see clearly the ill-health of our society. An improvement in the position of disadvantaged groups should be our priority commitment.

Vision

Our objectives must constantly be related to the basic values outlined above. We seek to build an equal and just society in which all people achieve their fullest potential. We should not be shy of stating clearly such a vision. We need to be open to, and excited by, the possibilities of change being effected through the actions of all people, and, in particular, young people. In order to do so we need to dispel all the inhibitions we have towards thinking, dreaming and talking about creating a better future. But futures must be grounded in reality.

We are engaged, daily, in the process of creating futures - but seldom do we recognise that throughout the social fabric there exist elements of the plurality, diversity, energy, inventiveness and sharing which can be the path of a society which exhibits equality and which is non-sexist; non-ageist; multi-racial; multi-cultural; and participatory, irrespective of 'ableness'.

We know, for example, that there exist 'alternative' lifestyles. These include such diversities as: living on communes or living openly as a gay person; having pride in being Aboriginal; embracing a religious sect; or developing new techniques of information-sharing (such as an 'alternative' magazine). People have developed community work co-operatives, 'appropriate' technology and 'survival' skills, on slim resources.

What tends to happen, however - and what has been highlighted by the outcomes of the consultation program recently conducted by YACA - is that the elements of change are not tapped and utilised, but are simply allowed to stagnate under the status quo. How can we, then, reverse this process to ensure that these elements are tapped and utilised? This must be done through a process of empowerment.

It is crucial that young people are meaningfully involved in creating their own futures. At the moment they are overwhelmingly excluded from decision-making and social action. Young people are, by and large, not asked for their views on desirable policies and programs - hence the importance of consultation programs. Much less are they involved in implementation and action.

They are, of course, not alone in this. It is a feature of our community that we hand control over many aspects of our lives to others or that this control is taken from us. As Friedmann says, 'We have all but relinquished our right to direct and control the destiny of the communities to which we belong'. He argues:

> As more and more of our lives are subsumed under the categories of the market, the production of life, including its creative and affective spheres, is becoming crippled and deformed. We lead lives that are atomised, privatised and manipulated by a tiny minority who, in turn, control the instruments of production (including information) and the organisation of markets and economic space ...
>
> A system that has no place for a majority of the people has lost the moral authority to prescribe what should be done. And therefore, for reasons of both moral vision and necessity, the public life of territorial communities must be recovered. We have to find the path for a direct engagement with the world to re-establish there the primacy of life over livelihood, of the political domain over the domain of economics, and of community over self-interest.[2]

So, in order for young people to be involved and for the necessary fundamental changes to occur, a process of empowerment is required. The approach to empowerment proposed here is drawn largely from the work of John Friedmann.[3]

The Process of Empowerment

Friedmann has identified the bases for the accumulation of social power as 'productive assets' (land, finance, equipment, buildings, your health); 'financial resources' (your income and credit worthiness); 'social and political organisations' that will advance your interests along with those of your sisters and brothers (political parties, syndicates, co-operatives, mutual aid societies); 'social networks' to link with, to get things done, and to find things out; 'appropriate knowledge and skills' and 'information' for advancing your life chances.

From the standpoint of policy development, three of the dimensions of access should be considered primary in the sense that improving access along any one of them will have the largest positive effect on the access profile as a whole. The primary access dimensions are: knowledge and skills, social and political organisation, and productive assets. For each of them, there exists a related, secondary dimension: information relevant to specific tasks, social networks and financial resources.

It is interesting to note that the words in fashion in the community sector are not the primary, but the secondary, dimensions. A short introduction to each of the primary dimensions appears below.

. New forms of organisation

Attempts to effect any redistribution of power in favour of the least

advantaged runs the risk of co-opting such individuals without altering the existing power structure or effecting needed change. New forms of social and political organisation are needed to provide essential passages to equality, justice and development. However this does not preclude existing forms of organisation from commencing evolutionary processes towards these goals. The new forms of organisation of which we speak must be truly involving of young people.

The local base forms the initial point from which young people and communities can enact strategies for action that include the development of these new forms of organisation. The local level is the appropriate first level of contact because, here, people focus their lives, identify in a neighbourhood or community or commerce to see linkages between issues. Here too, the impact of external change is directly experienced, and here its deleterious effects can be creatively countered. Locally-based, locally-controlled work creation schemes provide one example of new forms of organisation in operation. Co-operative work creation schemes of a lasting, not temporary nature, and other imaginative schemes which seek new ways of dealing with old problems should be actively encouraged as legitimate components of the changing nature of Australian society. At the same time the obstacles and difficulties in this local approach must be faced. For while a local focus is achievable and desirable, communities will need to be aware both of external pressures and the interrelatedness of issues at State, national and international levels which influence life at a local level. They will need to ensure that the interests of particular groups such as women, disabled, gays and others mentioned earlier are taken into account.

. Knowledge and skills

Given the extent to which young people's sense of powerlessness has been internalised, the incentive and motivation for young people to get involved has been forcibly diminished. It therefore becomes a key factor to be addressed in any empowerment process. The codes which inhibit the exchange of information must be broken. Political dialogue must, as Friedmann claims, be conducted in the language of 'ordinary folk'. It must deal with the issues with which they are familiar and about which they care enough to engage in serious discussion.

But political dialogue must also address the extent to which people have been robbed of politics. This does not just mean Party politics. People have been robbed even of political discussions and involvement at all levels. Therefore, the challenge is to make both language and concepts accessible.

. Productive assets

It was argued earlier that the process of asserting control over our lives comes through the creation of new forms of social and political organisation and that these are most appropriately established at local community levels. But what would occur if such processes could not be resourced? Would the 'vital sense of community, history and destiny', already denied by society to young people, be completely lost to us all?

We need to provide resources in a way which makes individuals and organisations self-managing rather than dependent, co-operative rather than competitive. Productive assets are primary to the provision of

financial resources. Co-operative ownership of productive assets breaks the cycle of disenfranchisement entailed in the continued dependence on others to provide a workplace, a source of income and the other necessities of life.

In simple terms the productive assets required to break this cycle are labour and capital. Examples where these two have come together include a shoe co-operative for young people in Western Australia; a recycling co-operative in Maryborough, Victoria; a printing co-operative in Melbourne, Victoria. The necessary extension of these intitiatives is to provide land and buildings.

Conclusion

The stultifying conceptions of youth policy must be swept away. Youth policy is not about minding young people while they await a promised golden future. It is not about narrow departmental functions. Youth policy must contribute to broad social changes which ensure equality, justice and development for all. These changes can only occur if there is firm commitment to these values, if analysis is undertaken of their implementation and if people are empowered in fundamental ways.

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* * * * *

MEASURING THE STATUS OF YOUTH: SOME CHALLENGES FOR YOUTH POLICY

by

*Richard Sweet**

The level of unemployment is widely used for three purposes: measuring the performance of the economy, measuring the state of the labour market and measuring labour market related economic hardship. Since the mid-1970s measured unemployment has been used almost exclusively as an index of the number of youth for whom traditional forms of employment and education have not provided.

In recent months both the election of a new federal government and discussions within the Australian Education Council have strengthened some long-standing pressures for the development of a comprehensive national youth policy. If the term is to have any meaning, it is critical that it take into account accurate estimates of the number and proportion of the age group for whom special provision needs to be made. In essence what is needed is an index of youth in difficulty in the transition from the status of school student to independent adulthood. My concern here is with the inadequacies, for use as such an index, of unemployment as measured among teenagers by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). When used as an index of youth in need, unemployment is both a highly ambiguous measure and a significant underestimate. Indeed with respect to teenage girls in particular it is a gross underestimate.

These difficulties in the use of unemployment measures stem from three features of the teenage labour market which distinguish it from adult labour markets: its overlap with the education sector, the particular nature of the part-time labour market among teenagers and the difficulty of associating teenage non-participation in education and the labour force with commonly accepted social roles or with acceptable means of income support.

Educational Overlap

The general community image of unemployed teenagers is of youth who, having left school, are not full-time post-secondary students and are looking for a full-time job. The failure of ABS to disaggregate post-secondary students from those who have left school in its monthly labour force surveys makes precise measurement of the effect of educational participation upon measured unemployment difficult. However if we confine attention to the effect of school participation we find that, averaged over the two year period January 1981 to December 1982, 24 per cent or virtually a quarter, of teenagers classified as unemployed by ABS were not those who had left school and were looking for full-time work. They were largely school students looking for a part-time pocket money job after school hours, together with a smaller additional number who were in the

* Counselling Research Unit, NSW Department of TAFE

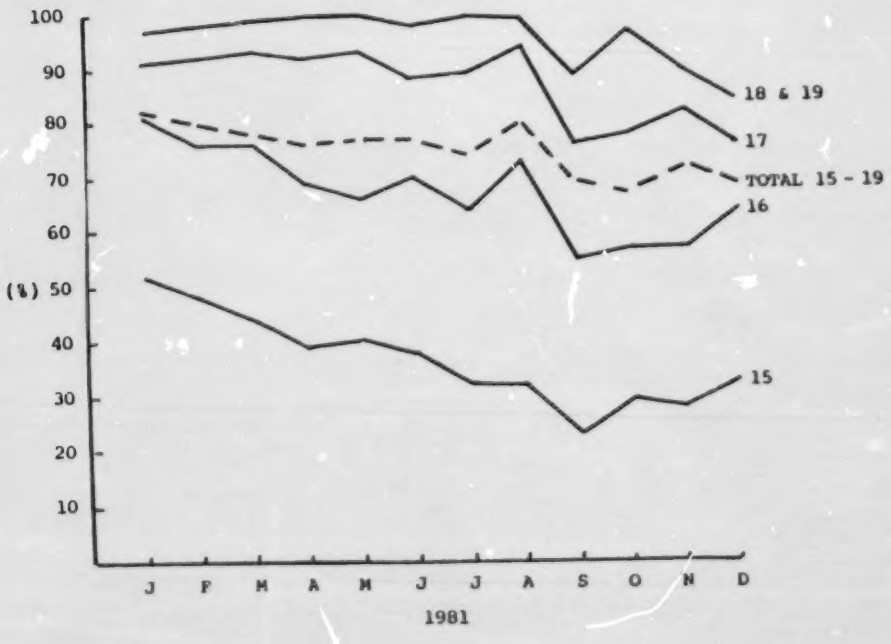
market for a full-time job but had not yet left school. In essence they were testing the labour market without taking the risk of actively entering it on a full-time basis.

Neither group can, in terms of economic need, source of identity and esteem or need for social and welfare support, be regarded as in any sense comparable with teenagers on the dole and in search of full-time work.

The effect of school participation upon measured teenage unemployment as an index of social need fluctuates over the year (Figure 1). It is

FIGURE 1

PERSONS AGED 15 - 19
NOT AT SCHOOL AND SEEKING FULL - TIME
WORK AS A % OF TOTAL UNEMPLOYED
BY AGE



greatest in the last quarter of the year and least in the first quarter of the year. Furthermore the extent of the overestimation depends upon the age of the person. For older teenagers - those aged 18 and 19 - the overestimation is slight; during 1981 an average of 96 per cent of this group of the unemployed had left school and were seeking full-time work. However for younger teenagers the proportion of the unemployed falling in this category is much smaller. For 15 year-olds during 1981 it averaged only 36 per cent, or just over a third. For 16 year-olds only 67 per cent, or two-thirds, of the unemployed over the same period were those not at school and seeking full-time work.

For the older teenager, measured unemployment can be interpreted as an index of economic and social need. However, for younger teenagers its meaning is much more ambiguous, being heavily distorted by school students' labour market involvement.

The additional effect of post-secondary educational participation can be assessed from unpublished data from two ABS surveys for May 1980 and May 1981.[1] (A comparable 1982 survey is not yet available in its final form.) When tertiary students looking for part-time work or testing the waters of the full-time labour market are extracted, those not in education and looking for full-time work are found to constitute only 72 per cent and 71 per cent of the measured number of unemployed teenagers in 1980 and 1981 respectively.

Post-School Social and Economic Need

The ambiguity of measured teenage unemployment as an index of social and economic need, due to the effect of educational participation, is complemented by its significant underestimation of difficulty in the transition from school when it is applied to post-school youth. The problem of measuring this under-estimation stems from the ABS failure to separate post-secondary students from others who have left school in its regular labour force surveys, particularly in respect of those working part-time and those not in the labour force. Again our only source of information is unpublished data from surveys carried out in May 1980 and May 1981.

For teenagers who have left school, the most satisfactory forms of activity are a full-time job or a place in a full-time course. The one accumulates work experience and on-the job training which have a high value in the market place. The other normally leads to credentials which can be used to negotiate a position on the ladder above those without credentials. Both are an investment in future labour market security. Thus rather than asking how many teenagers are unemployed it is important, within a comprehensive youth policy, to ask how many have fallen out of these two main safety nets in the transition from school. Table 1 provides an answer using May 1981 data (1980 figures provide essentially the same picture).[2]

In May 1981, 88,200 post-school teenagers who were not involved in education on a full-time basis were classified as unemployed by ABS. However, when we extract those studying full-time and those with a full-time job we find that there remained a further 81,800 teenagers unaccounted for, nearly as many again as those officially regarded as unemployed. The

great majority of these 81,800 are groups about whom a comprehensive youth policy needs to be concerned.

TABLE 1

PERSONS AGED 15 to 19 NOT AT SCHOOL BY LABOUR FORCE AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS AUSTRALIA, 1981 ('000)

	FEMALES	MALES	PERSONS
Full-time work	222.0	317.0	539.0
Full-time education	70.5	41.9	112.4
Unemployed	48.3	39.9	88.2
Other	57.4	24.4	81.8
- Part-time education	-3.2	-6.1	-9.4
- Part-time work	-21.2	-11.2	-32.4
- No education or Labour force status	-33.1	-7.0	-40.1
TOTAL	398.2	423.2	821.4

A small group of 9,400 were studying on a part-time basis, in most instances in conjunction with a part-time job. Although this is a form of activity which has been canvassed as desirable within the context of youth policy,[3] it appears to be a minor activity, undertaken largely by teenage males.

32,400 of the 81,800 had only a part-time job. Although adult part-time jobs last an average of 20 hours a week or more and, in many cases such as those in the retail industry, are likely to be permanent or at least regular, for teenagers, part-time jobs are much less attractive. They are very brief, lasting an average of seven to ten hours per week, are very poorly paid (an average of $3 to $4 per hour is common) and in most cases are seasonal, casual and irregular. They are generally unskilled and carry no associated training and no promotion prospects. They are dead-end jobs on the margins of the labour force which provide little opportunity to graduate into the full-time primary labour market.[4]

Although the ABS defines anyone working for an hour or more per week as employed, many teenagers whose only labour force status is a part-time job are in fact unemployed and receiving the dole. Their part-time earnings are insufficient to infringe their eligibility for unemployment benefits but their activity in acquiring this supplementary income is sufficient for ABS no longer to regard them as unemployed. They represent disguised unemployment even if not hidden unemployment in the standard econometric sense.

The group about whom most concern could be expressed is the 40,100 with no attachment to either education or the labour force, of whom 83 per cent were teenage girls. For adults who drop out of the labour force there exist accepted, and in many instances valued, roles such as mother, senior citizen or housewife. Furthermore these groups are catered for by a wide range of income support systems such as pensions, superannuation or spouse's income.

However, teenagers who belong neither in the labour force nor in education are in effect in limbo. There is no commonly recognised role which they can adopt and they do not qualify for the educational or labour market income support schemes (including wages) applicable to the bulk of youth. Admittedly some are on supporting parent's benefits, but two points need to be made in relation to this.

The number of ex-nuptial births to teenage girls has, if anything, declined during the recession. It averaged 9,518 per year between 1970 and 1974 and 9,003 per year between 1975 and 1980. Thus it is hard to regard the 33,100 girls with no educational or labour force attachment as recession-inspired single mothers. They are more likely to represent an involuntary retreat into unpaid domestic labour in the face of a hostile labour market (in any case motherhood should not automatically be regarded as excluding labour force participation).

Furthermore, in the context of a comprehensive youth policy, single mothers on supporting parent's benefit give cause for concern if their status isolates them from education and early work experience which can prepare them for later participation in the workforce as an independent adult. Without appropriate provision they are at risk of becoming longer-term dependants upon the welfare system.

The importance of considering this 'in limbo' group within a comprehensive youth policy is underscored by the growing recognition that the dividing line between the categories 'unemployed' and 'not in the labour force' is a blurred one.[5]

The effect of a shift from using unemployment to using a measure of non-participation in either full-time work, full-time education, or a combination of part-time work and part-time education as an index of economic and social need among youth is much greater for teenage girls than for teenage boys, although it is considerable for both. On the basis of May 1981 figures, the most recent generally available, the total number of post-school youth in need rises by 84 per cent from 88,200 on the basis of unemployment figures to 162,700. Among boys there is a 48 per cent rise from 39,900 to 59,000; among girls the increase from 48,300 to 103,600 represents a 114 per cent rise.

In May 1981, a year in which the labour market was showing signs of recovery, the unemployment rate for post-school teenagers not in full-time

Education was 13.5 per cent - 11.0 per cent for boys and 16.5 per cent for girls. If, instead, we ask what proportion of the age group were not catered for either by full-time work, full-time education or a part-time combination of both, we find that the measure of youth in need in the transition from school rises to 23.4 per cent of the age group. In 1981, 15.9 per cent of teenage boys and 31.8 per cent of teenage girls who had left school were either unemployed, in a dead-end part-time job (often in conjunction with the dole) or had no educational or labour force attachment whatsoever.

If at a time when the labour market was relatively buoyant one in six post-school teenage boys and one in three post-school teenage girls could be regarded as being 'at risk' in the transition from school, the need for a comprehensive youth policy and for programs to implement it become even more urgent in the current economic climate. One component of this policy should be a requirement that ABS disaggregate post-secondary students from other post-school youth in its monthly labour force surveys in order for a more comprehensive index of youth in need to be constructed on a regular basis.

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5. See, for example, 1983 Economic Summit Information Paper on the Economy, pp.39-40.

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SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN SCHOOL LEAVERS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

by

Marika Tiggemann * *and Tony Winefield* **

The purpose of this paper is to present some preliminary data from an ongoing research project into the psychological consequences of unemployment among young people (see Abstracts B28,44,96,121). The study is being conducted over four years (1980-1983) in Adelaide, jointly by the University of Adelaide and the Education Department of South Australia, with chief investigators Tony Winefield, Marika Tiggemann and Jane Delin. The project illustrates several research strategies which may prove useful in our understanding of unemployment, in that it is being conducted using a longitudinal research design and within a theoretical framework.

Introduction

Anecdotal reports suggest that unemployment has profound psychological consequences for the young. Unemployed youngsters have been described as 'slouched in front of the telly watching the midday movie, bored, lonely, depressed' (Farrell, 1978), and as experiencing 'overwhelming feelings of powerlessness' (Wagstaff, 1979). Links have been suggested between unemployment and a variety of societal ills, including drug-taking and crime. It seems obvious that we must substantiate and document such reports with hard evidence if we wish to effect any political or educational change. Although gaining momentum, such contemporary Australian research into specifically psychological consequences is still relatively scarce. Yet it is these effects which may well persist, even after political and economic problems have been resolved. At the societal level, there is no guarantee that the recovery of the economy will not leave behind a large group of 'unemployables'. Likewise at the individual level, there is no guarantee that any negative psychological effects will be reversed just because an individual is able to obtain a job.

One group likely to experience particular problems are school leavers who have no history of successful previous employment. Adolescence is an important time for establishing independence and consolidating a sense of personal identity, and one way of achieving this is through employment. As Windschuttle (1979: p.55) writes, the first job is 'the capitalist equivalent of initiation rites in primitive society'. School leavers are also numerically the most likely to become unemployed. As at February 1983, the unemployment rate for 15-19 year olds looking for work in Australia was 17.9 per cent (25.1 per cent in South Australia).

From the 1930s onward, case histories have documented a major effect of unemployment to be a sense of powerlessness, a loss of feeling of control. This is precisely the kind of state which has recently come to be labelled 'learned helplessness' (Seligman, 1975). A learned helplessness model of unemployment would concentrate not on lack of money but on lack of control as crucial to the unemployment experience, with the individual feeling 'what's the use', 'nothing I do matters', etc. The

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learned helplessness theory has also been postulated as a model of reactive depression, and more recently has been reformulated to include the causal attributions an individual makes; i.e. what or whom he blames.

We would hope that studies such as ours could make a practical contribution in providing feedback to school counsellors and guidance officers. Many current career education courses are geared toward helping people find jobs by, for example, improving skills or interview techniques. Implicit is the assumption that if you try hard enough you will get a job. If an individual is then unable to obtain a job, he is likely to hold himself responsible; i.e. make an internal attribution for that failure. This is precisely what the learned helplessness theory predicts as leading to loss of self-esteem and depression. We should aim at a policy which teaches school leavers not only to compete successfully for employment, but also to cope psychologically without loss of self-esteem resulting in perhaps depression or other maladaptive behaviours, should they be unsuccessful in gaining employment. This, of course, implies the somewhat radical step of giving recognition to the fact that many school leavers are likely to face a period of unemployment.

Method

. Design

In order to be able to come to more definite conclusions about causality, a longitudinal research design was employed. Essentially the same questionnaire was administered to respondents at yearly intervals from 1980-1982 (Times 1 to 3), and will be administered again in 1983 (Time 4).

. Sample

Subjects consisted of all the Year 12 students attending twelve randomly sampled high schools in the Adelaide metropolitan area, together with the equivalent number of Year 10 and 11 students at those schools, randomly sampled by class. The final sample contained 3,130 students, 1,092 in year 10, 1,104 in year 11, and 934 in year 12. Respondents' ages ranged from 13-21, the bulk (81 per cent) being 15-17 years old, with a mean age of 15.6 years. Of the sample, 52 per cent were male and 48 per cent female.

. Questionnaire

The questionnaire employed in the pilot study of Tiggemann and Winefield (1980) was extensively redrafted. Respondents were asked background information, general attributions and feelings of control, attitudes to and expectations of employment and unemployment, as well as given the various psychological measures.

The psychological measures included both self-ratings of how often students felt bored, lonely, angry with themselves, angry with society, happy, helpless and depressed, and also recognised psychological scales. Self-esteem and depression were measured by Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem and Depressive Affect Scales respectively, designed specifically for adolescents. Locus of control (or the extent to which an individual

perceives events as under or outside his control) was measured by the Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Control Scale for Adults (Nowicki and Duke, 1974), which requires only 5th grade reading ability. The final psychological measure was Smith's (1973) Need for Achievement Scale. Overall the questionnaire was designed to obtain the maximum possible information in the shortest possible time.

. Procedure

The above questionnaire was administered in August 1980 (Time 1) to the sample of 3,130 students in their normal lesson time at school, that is before students had had an opportunity to experience either employment or unemployment. One year later, in August 1981 (Time 2), 98 per cent of the respondents were resurveyed (2 per cent were untraceable). Those continuing at school (just under half) were contacted through the schools, the rest through the post, resulting in an overall return rate of 73.6 per cent.

The data from the administration in August 1982 (Time 3) are not yet fully analysed and will not be presented.

Some Results

. Attitudes and expectations

Students rated having a job when they finished studying as very important for themselves and for their parents. Most (79 per cent) had a particular job in mind they would try to get which fell into the occupational categories of 46 per cent lower professional, 15 per cent clerical, 9 per cent armed forces, 15 per cent trades, 1 per cent shop assistants, 11 per cent service work, and 4 per cent unskilled. Most (85 per cent) expected to have a job within 6 months of finishing studying and several (29 per cent) said they would not go on the dole if unable to find a job. The getting of jobs was attributed by most to trying hard (51 per cent) followed by abilities and intelligence (36 per cent). The inability to get a job was attributed mainly to not trying hard enough (39 per cent) followed by the external situation (26 per cent).

It can be seen from these results that attitudes to work were reasonably positive and aspirations quite high. Jobs were considered important and able to be obtained reasonably quickly, the main determinant being effort. The dole was viewed somewhat unfavourably. The appropriateness of such attitudes in times of high unemployment is questionable. The results certainly contradict the suggestion that there has been a decline in the work ethic among the young.

. Experience of employment and unemployment

In August 1981, one year after the initial survey, 51 per cent of respondents had left school. These school leavers were occupied as follows: full-time students, 25 per cent; employed full-time, 52 per cent; employed part-time, 9 per cent; and unemployed, 14 per cent.

Of those who were employed (full or part-time), 7 per cent had lower professional, 30 per cent clerical, 4 per cent armed forces, 15 per cent trade, 18 per cent shop assistant, 12 per cent service work, and 14 per cent unskilled jobs. It can be seen that these are in general lower in

occupational status than the ones to which they had earlier aspired (46 per cent lower professional, 4 per cent unskilled). Furthermore, these jobs had generally not been easily come by. Seventy per cent reported having applied for more than 2 jobs, including 44 per cent for 6 or more, before obtaining their present employment; and for this 27 per cent had had to wait longer than three months.

Of the unemployed, 63 per cent had been so for more than three months, with 43 per cent for more than six months. There was no doubt that the majority actually wanted jobs with only 3 per cent of the unemployed saying they preferred not to have a job. The main reason given for not having a job was the external situation (36 per cent) followed by lack of abilities or skills (34 per cent). Most (88 per cent) received unemployment benefits. It is perhaps heartening that 24 per cent were undertaking part-time study of some sort.

. Comparisons between the unemployed and employed

As expected, relatively more of the girls who had left school were unemployed than the boys (17 per cent vs 12 per cent), as were more people from non-English speaking homes (22 per cent vs 13 per cent).

Although more high SES school leavers and more year 12s continued on to further study, there was no significant relationship between either SES or level of schooling and being employed or unemployed. Employment status was, however, related to unemployment in the immediate family, in that 22 per cent of those who became unemployed had said earlier that someone in their immediate family was unemployed, compared with only 13 per cent of those who subsequently became employed. This relationship is perhaps mediated by the provision of a role model.

. Self-ratings

At Time 2 the unemployed rated themselves as significantly more lonely and depressed, and very much more bored, helpless and less happy than their employed counterparts. To ascertain whether these are antecedent or consequent differences, it is necessary to refer back to the Time 1 data, before unemployment or employment was experienced. Those who subsequently became unemployed had twelve months earlier rated themselves only as a bit more depressed. They were certainly not at that stage significantly more bored, lonely, helpless or less happy. These latter, then, are subsequent consequences of their unemployment experience.

It cannot be merely assumed, however, that changes take place solely in the unemployed group. A comparison of ratings at Time 1 and 2 revealed that the unemployed had become significantly less angry with themselves, less happy, more helpless and less depressed over the twelve months. The employed had likewise become less angry with themselves and less depressed. In addition they had become less bored and less helpless.

Piecing all this information together suggests that lower depression and less anger with oneself are a function of leaving school (these changes are also shared by the full-time students, but not by those still at school). Loss of happiness and an increase in helplessness appear to be a function of the unemployment experience, and less helplessness and boredom a function of gaining employment. These are the kinds of conclusions allowed only by a longitudinal research design.

. Psychological scales

While self-ratings tend to reflect more transient mood changes, psychological scales are designed to measure more stable personality characteristics.

The unemployed demonstrated significantly lower self-esteem (7.9 vs 8.5 per cent) and more depressive effect (1.6 vs 1.1 per cent), than the employed. These differences had not been apparent one year earlier, and hence must be consequent on the unemployment experience.

Comparisons between Time 1 and Time 2 showed a more internal locus of control, for both the employed and unemployed. Similarly an increase in self-esteem was observed in both groups. These changes were also shared by the full-time students. In addition, a decrease in depression was observed for the employed, but not for the unemployed or for the full-time students.

This suggests that everyone had become more internal in their control orientation. While an increase in self-esteem was similarly obtained for all groups, the employed showed the largest increase. A decrease in depression is related only to being employed. So it seems that the observed difference in self-esteem between the employed and the unemployed is due not to a decrease in self-esteem on the part of the unemployed, but rather to a larger increase among those who obtained jobs. Similarly, it is not the unemployed who become more depressed, but the employed who become less so.

When analysed separately, the differences between the employed and unemployed girls were much smaller than for the boys, at both Times 1 and 2. It may be that girls do not see employment status as crucial and central to their identity as do boys, perhaps as a result of having other options.

Some Implications

It is clear from the above results that the work ethic was well accepted by this sample of young people, both as students and when they had left school, even if they were unemployed. Further, there is a clear mismatch between aspiration and outcome. At Time 1, 85 per cent had expected to have a job within six months of finishing studying, whereas nine months after leaving school, only 69 per cent of these were employed full-time. And the jobs they had obtained were considerably lower in status than those they had aspired to. As students, respondents had attributed the getting of jobs mainly to trying hard, and the inability to get a job to not trying hard enough. Clearly in the present situation this is just not so for some people.

The main conclusion from this study is that even short-term unemployment does have significant psychological impact on school leavers. The young unemployed person reports greater negative affect in that he feels more bored, lonely, helpless, and unhappy. On the more stable personality test he scores lower on self-esteem and higher on depression than his employed counterpart. Furthermore, unlike most previous studies, the research design here provides evidence that these psychological

effects were attributable to the (un)employment experience.

More detailed analysis showed these psychological consequences to be of an unexpected kind. The observed difference in self-esteem between the employed and unemployed was due not to a decrease in self-esteem on the part of the unemployed, but rather due to a larger increase among those obtaining jobs, consistent with the finding of Gurney (1980). A similar pattern was also obtained for depressive effect.

Such a finding should not, however, allow us to become complacent. The results are consistent with a notion of work leading to growth rather than unemployment leading to debilitation. For these young people, getting a job is still the 'normal' and desired option in our society, and provides something valuable for their identity and self-concept - something which school had apparently not provided. It appears that the unemployed individual is not given the same opportunity to grow and develop as his employed counterpart. The data from Times 3 and 4 should help in ascertaining whether such consequences subside after the individual is able to obtain a job. Alternatively, it may be that if the opportunities provided by a job are denied for a sufficiently long period of time, these ill-effects will persist and eventuate in permanent psychological damage.

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PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH POLICY: A VIEW FROM EDUCATION

by

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Youth Policy and Secondary Education - Problem or Solution?

In recent years there have been a number of Australians who have stressed the need for a comprehensive policy for youth. Peter Karmel, while chairman of the Tertiary Education Commission and Ken McKinnon, formerly chairman of the Schools Commission, were among those calling for such a policy.

> Policies for supporting youth have not yet been integrated with education and training policies, nor have they been rationalized. The inconsistencies are illustrated by the anomaly between unemployment benefits and allowances for further education. Take, for example, the situation of a young person who leaves school with the academic qualifications to go on to university, or who has supported herself for a year before deciding to enrol in a tertiary institution. Such a person could discover that, because of her parental income, she is ineligible for any kind of education allowance. On the other hand, if she is unemployed and not studying, she is entitled to unemployment benefits of $40 per week if she is under 18, and $64.40 per week if she is over 18. She can, however, continue to receive unemployment benefits, provided she does not study more than eight hours per week, between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. each day, but studying more than that means the loss of benefits. If she wants to study full-time, she must rely on her parents for support - a situation that may not be acceptable to either ...
>
> A rationalised education and training allowances scheme would encourage young people to gain work experience by part-time employment, and permit a combination of part-time training and part-time employment, with unemployment benefits being available only as a last resort. (McKinnon, 1982)

There is a direct connection between youth policy and the structure of secondary education. One of the unfortunate patterns of the recent past is that secondary education has been seen as a substitute for a broad policy for youth. In July 1983 however, the Federal Government indicated its intention to develop such a policy, through the following Press Release from the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Senator Susan Ryan:

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> The Commonwealth Government is moving to give effect to its commitment to enlarge and integrate the range of options available to youth in education, training and employment.
>
> The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Senator Susan Ryan, has announced that the Government has decided that her department would have overall responsibility for the co-ordination of all Commonwealth policies, programs and proposals to the extent that they affected youth.
>
> Co-ordination would be achieved by a Standing Committee on Youth Policies, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Education and Youth Affairs, Dr Peter Wilenski, and would include Second Division Officers from DEYA, and the Departments of Employment and Industrial Relations and Social Security, and the Office of the Status of Women.
>
> She said that the Government aimed to:
>
> - rationalise the various schemes of income support for young people; and
> - relate education and training to changing social, economic and technological conditions. (Teacher, July 1983)

This is a welcome initiative from government. From the viewpoint of education a carefully developed relationship between education and training and the changes in social, economic and technological conditions would be of great value. Equally, the measure for income support for young people has considerable effect on secondary education. In the context of the discussions on secondary education that have been occurring in recent years, a more comprehensive approach is very welcome. Secondary education has suffered considerably from an over-simplification of the issues: this has lead to exaggerated claims of two kinds. In the first instance, the claims of the 1960s related to all the benefits which education could deliver. In the second instance, the claims of the late 1970s and the 1980s relate to all the problems caused by education.

> Only a few years ago the "conventional wisdom" of economists held that education was a consumption expenditure, whereas investment expenditures were obviously the prime movers of economic growth. In these circumstances, education budgets were at a competitive disadvantage. Rather suddenly economists forsook this conventional wisdom and agreed that education, in addition to being a consumption good, was an indispensable investment in national growth ... To sum up, education is the new girl in town ... and all the old boys are eager to dance with her. (Coombs, 1964)

This was written in 1964, at a period when education was seen as strongly and positively linked with development. It was a part of the thrust of aid to developing countries through UNESCO, OECD, the UN Special Fund and the World Bank, as well as from national governments and corporations.

Education was seen as contributing to society in a number of ways. It was an important aspect of productivity and economic growth; it was an equalising factor in individual economic and social opportunity and thus could reduce class differences; it was a contributor to healthier and more socially acceptable decisions and could thus lessen the effect of problems such as drug abuse and road accidents. Small wonder that 'all the old boys are eager to dance with her'. Now, the dance goes on, but Education is no longer 'the new girl in town'. Indeed, she may not even be invited to the party.

The unreal positive claims have mostly been with respect to social issues. In the U.S., one task of education was seen as that of developing racial harmony and equity. A further task was seen as reducing inequality of opportunity for different social groups. These two types of objectives are equally relevant for Australia. There can be no argument with the value of the intentions. Unfortunately, in both cases, it is equally clear that education on its own cannot resolve social problems of such magnitude even though it may contribute to more widely based solutions. Currently, however, the emphasis has moved from unreal positive claims to unreal negative claims. A frequent and widely quoted claim is that education, or rather miseducation, causes unemployment. In the Melbourne Age of 22 January 1981, the then Minister for Employment, Mr Ian Viner, wrote:

> As the statement (of the Schools Commission) said 'Young Australians who leave school only to become unemployed are being ill-served by the society of which they are an important part'. Unless changes are made to Australia's education and training systems the situation in which so many young Australians find themselves will not change greatly.

Here again the intention is irreproachable. Mr Viner wrote of the waste involved for 'some 50,000 young Australians who have left school but are not in work'. This is a waste whose tragedy we all recognise. But it is simply not true to imply that had their education been different, they would have found jobs. Youth unemployment is a recent phenomenon. It did not arise for 20 years with the same pattern of secondary education. It arose quite simply because the labour force grew more rapidly than the number of jobs available. To have educated those 50,000 differently would simply have created a better qualified class of unemployed. That may be a worthwhile task, but it would not solve unemployment.

In similar vein, secondary education is frequently given the responsibility for declining academic standards, for poor discipline and manners. The penchant for following fashions in education seems to apply to both sets of unreal claims, positive and negative. From being too ready to believe that education could do everything, we now seem too ready to believe that it can do almost nothing, or alternatively that it is harmful. Ted Sizer in the U.S.A. wrote persuasively of the sense of confusion which surrounds the situation.

> ... the sense of optimism and commitment which infused this effort (in secondary schools) now seems to be slipping ... Even more important, the society has begun to lose confidence in high schools. For more than a

> decade educational commentators, social researchers and reformers have pictured high schools as a source of social problems, rather than as the solution to them. For most of their history, secondary schools were perceived as the best way to remedy boredom and mischievous idleness and to prepare adolescents for work and the tasks of citizenship. Now secondary schools are often portrayed as a source of alienation and as a poor alternative to experience - in community institutions or jobs - in preparing adolescents for adult life ... For the many parents who continue to perceive secondary education as a moral process, there is a sense that common purpose and shared values have been replaced by fragmentation, conflict and confusion. (Sizer, 1981)

The confusion is made worse by the radical differences between different groups of critics. Their arguments are contradictory, only the dissatisfaction is shared.

Criticism from the right is frequently linked with unemployment, with the emphasis being that the links between school and society, particularly the links between school and vocations, are ineffective. The claims include the following:

- The school does not relate to the needs of society. Vocationally oriented education has been replaced by an egalitarian education which over-emphasises the social functions of the school.
- The increase in participation in secondary schools has been accompanied by a decrease in standards of achievement, particularly in the 'basic' subjects, and in academic studies.
- Egalitarianism has caused a removal of competition and of incentives, such as external examinations, and this has led to a decline in intellectual rigour and in discipline.
- Gifted students have not been challenged to develop their abilities because of a doctrinaire egalitarianism.

Claims such as these were featured in the Black Papers in the United Kingdom (Cox and Dyson, 1969, 1970) and in the publications of the Australian Council for Educational Standards (ACES) in Australia.

At the other end of the spectrum of criticisms is the neo-Marxist analysis which sees the school merely as an instrument of society, an instrument which confirms and extends the inequalities of society. The views of the left on the same issues as identified by right-wing critics are strikingly different:

- The school is too responsive to society. Through its approaches and organisation it prepares students for repressive relations in the work-place and for the process of alienation which ensues.
- The school is not an instrument of social mobility and change. The increase of participation in secondary

education has had no genuine effect in broadening the base of education opportunity. The traditional academic curriculum still retains its dominance, transforming individuals into competitive men and women who function effectively in the capitalist system.

- The comprehensive school is dominated by a competitive individual approach to curriculum and evaluation. There is a contradiction between the working-class family's practices of co-operation coping and the school curriculum's demand for individual achievement.
- The measures used to identify gifted students, such as IQ scores, are social constructs. Making special provision for gifted students is another indication of the school's primary achievement, the maintenance and reproduction of class relationships in society.

Key writers in this vein are Bowles and Gintis (1976), Carnoy (1974), Katz (1968), Apple (1979), Connell et al. (1982).

It is, of course, not fair to either group to summarise their substantial analyses so baldly. The purpose of doing it in this way is to present starkly the position of the teacher, pictured on one had as a progressive, leading students into anti-educational activities and attitudes, and on the other hand as a reactionary tool, confirming the oppression of capitalist society.

In the confusion of charges there is a danger that secondary schools might adopt a defensive mood, content to shelter from criticism and accept no responsibility as a defence to the charge that it carried all responsibility. In the positive mood related to the decision to develop a comprehensive policy, those concerned with secondary education have an important part to play.

Issues Affecting Secondary Education

Secondary education is of necessity the agency of transition to adult living. As the only stage of education for which this is true for the whole population, it thus is more affected by changes in society of all kinds. The current situation is brought about by the size and rapidity of those changes. The origin of secondary schools was in the need to prepare a minority of the population for skilled and responsible tasks. It succeeded in doing this by the provision of an academic curriculum, designed to prepare students for higher education but useful for more general purposes for students whose motivation and background gave them support. As society changed, in technology and in life patterns, the requirements from schooling have become more complex and difficult to satisfy. A brief summary of the issues will illustrate the situation.

a) Technological Changes

- Communication: After centuries of gentle change, the printing press brought an abrupt change and this was the major feature of communication from 1450 for the next 400+ years. Then with bewildering suddenness, the developments in photography and

electronics made possible radio, film, television, disc and tape recordings: the linkage of these to computers, to cable and satellite communication has brought an enormous wealth of information potentially into the hands of everyone. The power of these media, politically, economically and in life patterns is enormous. As one illustration, by the age of 11 a child will have spent on the average 5000 hours in school and 11,000 in front of TV: by 17, the figures will be 15,000 hours in school, 25,000 hours for TV. Paradoxically, enormous critical attention is devoted to the school curriculum, almost none at all to the alternative, TV curriculum.

. Computers/Micro-Processors: The use of computers and, subsequently, micro-processors is making dramatic changes to the structure of employment, changes which may mean that even after a recovery from the current economic recession full employment will not be restored.

> The greatest threat to Western Society at the moment is the rapid displacement of labour by technology. Present trends in unemployment do not represent a mere downturn in business activity or a temporary recession, which will in time correct itself. Jobs in the manufacturing sector are, and have been for some time, on the way out. What we see now is an acceleration of an historical process which can be traced back at least a couple of centuries, a process which involves a shift in the principal economic activities from manipulating land, to manipulating machines, to manipulating information. (Stonier, 1982)

The situation in Australia with respect to employment is certainly one of major concern. In April 1983, 6.24 million were employed and 707,000 unemployed; i.e. 10.2 per cent of the total labour force (ABS, 1983).

The labour force is 60.2 per cent of the total population, an unusually high proportion. Ruthven points out that the labour force remained constant at about 40 per cent of the population for many centuries (Ruthven, 1980). His analysis supports the claim that a major employment restructuring takes place every 40-50 years and is followed by the development of a new growth industry. In this instance the new technologies may provide such a development, but they will almost certainly imply quite different employment patterns.

As far as schools are concerned, the employment changes pose particular problems. While the overall employment rate was 10.2 per cent in April 1983, the rate for the age group 15-19 was 26 per cent. This is a change from 13.9 per cent in 1976 (ABS, 1983). This is part of a major change in pattern for this age group: in 1966 approximately 60 per cent (615,000) were in full-time employment; in 1981 the proportion was 40 per cent (407,000). By contrast, the part-time employment figures rose from 3.6 per cent to 12.7 per cent in the period; i.e. from 37,000 to 145,000. These part-time positions were in the main unskilled and short-term, not leading to full-time employment, and lacking in job satisfaction.

These changes have happened in a period when the 15-19 population grew by 230,000 (Learning and Earning, 1982).

This effect was strengthened by the structural changes. In 1971-81, there was a major growth in professional employment overall, from 239,000 to 461,000, at the same time as a drop of 96,000 in 'blue-collar' employment. The effects here were age specific: there were 385,000 more white-collar jobs for the 25 and over, but 120,000 fewer blue-collar jobs; the 20 and under lost 73,000 white-collar jobs and gained 32,000 blue-collar. The effect was particularly severe for young females. Thus while the pattern for the workforce as a whole is towards greater skills, the pattern for younger members is towards fewer positions and a greater proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled (Learning and Earning, 1982). As will be emphasised later, the weakening of the perceived connection between education and employment makes a fundamental difference to the attitudes, and the decisions, of secondary students.

b) Social Changes

. Persistent major problems: The major world problems of violence and security, the control and sharing of resources, the provision of justice and the recognition of human rights are no closer to solution. There is a sense of uncertainty and powerlessness that leads to pessimism as we see mankind's most advanced institutions unable to resolve such issues. Young people in particular lack the high hopes of available solutions which were characteristic of the post-war generation. These failures of moral decision-making stand in contrast to the technological advances of our societies.

. Family patterns: Many factors contribute to considerable changes in family life. Higher divorce rates, more emphasis on sexual promiscuity, a greater tendency to segregate the elderly, an increase in youth homelessness are some of the signs of less stable relationships. The ordered settings with clear expectations on behaviour, which we traditionally ascribe to the family, are much less evident, with an associated increase in insecurity for youth. This area of uncertainty is linked with a questioning of the effectiveness of other institutions: democratic government, the church, and, of course, the school.

c) Changes Directly Associated with Education

. Secondary Retention: The retention patterns in secondary schools in Australia show a marked decrease after Year 10. For the 1974 Grade 6 cohort, 86 per cent survived until year 10, but only 48 per cent to year 11 and 28.1 per cent to year 12. While it is dangerous to make international comparisons, it is revealing to show the substantial differences in enrolment rates in full-time education for Australia and other countries. OECD (1981) gave the following comparative enrolment figures: United States, 75.7; Japan, 74.8; Switzerland, 71.0; Canada, 66.0; Australia 40.2.

The recent publication, Learning and Earning (CTEC, 1982), showed

the complex relationship between retention and employment. In the period 1966-73, the age-group showed a decline in full-time employment, and an accompanying increase in participation in education. This is logical enough, as an expression of intent to obtain better qualifications to compete more effectively for employment. In the period since 1974, however, while the decrease in employment opportunities continued, there was a decrease in educational participation. Some evidence was offered to indicate that that decrease itself may be a complex one, involving a substantial decrease in the educational participation rates of the more able students, and a slight increase for the less able. Put simply, those who could obtain jobs frequently did, but at the cost of those who in less competitive times could obtain those positions. In an interesting calculation of the effects of decreased participation, CTEC (1982) showed that 29,890 students would have been in education if previous rates had been maintained. They now constituted 32.8 per cent of the 91,000 unemployed in the 15-19 population. As has been indicated, even for the school leavers employed the situation has become worse: much of the employment is in short-term part-time jobs, leading nowhere. Further, the duration of unemployment has increased: for the 15-19 group, the average duration of unemployment in 1973 was 5.5 weeks for males, 10.2 weeks for females; by 1981 this had risen to 24.5 weeks for males, 26.0 weeks for females. In this debilitating atmosphere, it is perhaps not surprising that the proportion of year 12 students going on to higher education should also decrease, from 54.3 per cent in 1974 to 42.0 per cent in 1981. Retention in Australian secondary schools is clearly not good but retention is not an end in itself. Retention should be the result of an experience that is perceived as satisfying and useful, meeting both personal needs and the requirements of society.

- Satisfaction with education: Power (1983) reports on the dissatisfaction with schools expressed by secondary students, in a study of comparable groups in South Australia. In 1970, the proportions indicating that they were moderately or very dissatisfied totalled 53.2 per cent; in 1980 that total was 50 per cent. In interviews with groups of secondary students, Collins et al. (1980) tried to identify sources of dissatisfaction. Two sets of ex-students were interviewed, those who were unemployed and those who went on to tertiary study. The summarised comments were as follows:

i) Unemployed students: Areas of dissatisfaction

  - An unfriendly, uncaring environment
  - An over-emphasis on intellectual rather than all-round personal development
  - Inappropriate discipline
  - The irrelevance of most subjects to ordinary life
  - The lack of practical, everyday knowledge
  - The lack of subject choice.

ii) Tertiary students: Areas of dissatisfaction

- The school environment
- Failure to prepare students for work
- The knocking of self-confidence
- Failure to develop self and societal understanding.

> The process of schooling, the means by which goals are achieved was perhaps more a matter of complaint than the goals themselves. We saw the following matters, raised by respondents, as aspects of this general complaint: concern about discipline, indignation at the undermining of self-respect and self-confidence, the feeling that many teachers were uninterested in students as persons, the failure of schools to help with self and inter-personal awareness, bitterness at petty punishments, resentments at lack of freedom. The good things, mentioned by some, showed the importance of teacher-student relationships just as clearly as the complaints of the rest. (Collins, Clark, Moran and Warhurst, 1980)

Husen indicates that the phenomenon is widespread:

> There is ample evidence to show that in highly industrialised countries such as the United States, The Netherlands or the Federal Republic of Germany, attitude towards school becomes more negative as the students progress through the grades ... (Husen, 1979)

The work of Power indicates that satifaction at school is strongly related to socio-educational background and to student characteristics but that a strong element still relates to characteristics of the school (Power, 1983). In what ways can satisfaction with education be increased?

Motivation in secondary education: One aspect of increased satisfaction lies in the students' perception of what schools should do and what they see schools as doing. Students, in a number of studies (see Collins and Hughes, 1982) perceive the priorities in much the same way as do teachers and parents. They rate the priorities, in order, as: Basic Skills, Health Understanding, Practical Skills, Personal and Social Development, Discipline, Academic Studies, Aesthetic Education and Religious Education. The areas which they see the schools as most deficient in achieving, however, are Practical Skills and Personal and Social Development. What they seek in fact is a difficult combination, involving a recognition both of the practical, instrumental role of the school and also its role as a humane and caring community.

In the current situation, where the school is not seen as providing a practical emphasis, motivation becomes a problem. Many of the factors used in the past are no longer available

or no longer powerful; for example

- the unquestioning acceptance of authority
- the prospect of esteem. For most secondary students, their school experience reduces their self-esteem
- the prospect of rewards; e.g. employment
- the perception of usefulness.

School subjects, with the notable exception of areas such as Work Experience, are not seen as useful. It will be difficult to make major advances without taking account of this aspect. Students differentiated between subjects they see as interesting and subjects they see as useful. Only practically oriented subjects are rated high on both scales.

What are Appropriate Responses from Secondary Education?

It is easier to identify problems than to find solutions that are adequate. Unquestionably, secondary education presents us with some major difficulties. The most encouraging part is that as we identify and consider those difficulties, we can almost always find schools which have found means of solving them. We are not working in a situation without answers, but one in which the answers are not well recognised and the means by which they will become more widely useful are only just being tried. While there is no single dramatic solution, I believe that there are some emphases which are vital.

a) A Narrowing of Focus for Secondary Education is not the Answer

Some people call for a restriction of attention by the school to basic skills. While the importance of the basic skills is unquestioned what students need is not a narrower set of skills, but a much broader and more effective one. The demands of our current and the future society are for higher order skills, in communication, in mathematics, in acquiring information, in assessing information, in analysing arguments. The list can be extended. The point to be made is that the minimum requirements to be an effective and productive citizen in a democratic society demands a high capacity in a variety of areas, a capacity which calls for understanding as well as skills. To narrow that focus is to deny the possibilities of a democratic society for all its members.

b) A Narrowing of Population for Secondary Education is not the Answer

The same argument that prevents us from narrowing the focus of secondary education prevents us also from narrowing its population. It is worth noting that the expectations expressed by the groups in the studies strongly supports the concept of a broad secondary education for <u>all</u> students.

c) The Elimination of the Academic Emphasis is not the Answer

In terms of the unpopularity of the academic studies with many students, and their perceived irrelevance for most students, it is a strong temptation to develop a non-academic curriculum for a majority of secondary students, leaving the academic curriculum for the group proceeding to higher education. In terms of the ratings of importance of the academic studies, the same conclusion could also be possible. I do not believe that it would be possible to develop a curriculum for the secondary school to meet the needs of all students which did not include in some way the academic areas as a base. We really have no other way of conceptualising the world than through this accretion of human experience and reflection expressed in these various ways. The problems are less with the content than the processes by which it is organised and presented. We are not talking about untried or untreated approaches. The alternative courses reported on by Campbell and McMeniman (1983) show what can be done, not with new content but with new approaches.

d) Solutions Develop at School Level, but as a Result of Wide Co-operation

The problems of secondary education are broad, even international, in character. Solutions depend finally on what is achieved by students in individual schools. To some extent these solutions will be unique, determined by the context and the characteristics of the students and the teachers in particular schools. Those schools, however, will need substantial support, both at the school level and more widely. At the school level not only the teachers but the students and parents can help. The student's own attitudes are crucial, and in view of what has been said about motivation, must be taken into account. Equally, parent attitudes to school, and to learning, have proved to be powerful determinants of success. The positive interaction between the school and the parents can contribute greatly to the support of the latter. As has been shown, sufficient foundation for the co-operation of teachers, parents and students appears to exist.

Success for the schools in developing better approaches depends on more than this. We have moved in the past between two extremes. At one end, we have seen the success of education depending on the quality of central input. At the other, we have seen the school involved exclusively in the solution of its own problems. Neither extreme seems sensible. The contribution of researchers, curriculum specialists, media specialists can be significant in indicating the nature of the demands on the secondary curriculum and the quality and range of materials needed and available for it. The contributions at the school level are equally important but of a different nature. They relate to the perceptions of students and parents on the curriculum and these will be the final arbiters of its success. The level of co-operation has been low but substantial steps are now occurring, although in relatively isolated ways. The initiatives in action research from Deakin University and the work in professional development through the Centre for the Continuing Education for Teachers in Tasmania present interesting and valuable examples of genuine and effective co-operation between schools and tertiary institutions. Co-operation

between school systems and tertiary institutions is equally important.

e) Answers will be Built on Current Strengths/Agreements

We are not operating in the area of the unknown. A reasonably clear picture exists of the nature of the problems and this is based on substantial agreement for different groups. More than this, in almost every instance we can find schools where particular problems are reduced or eliminated. There are solutions available. Our task is to direct research so that it is not limited to analysis and explanation but is substantially concerned with answers and improvements. There are strengths for organisational change which we can use. There are approaches to evaluation which lead to improvements. The strengths of current schools are the best hope for future success.

One of the success stories in recent years is the work in professional development where teachers work in co-operative groups to describe and analyse their own situations, identify particular needs and develop helpful approaches. This is just one of the approaches which we can use in meeting the needs of secondary schools. We may not know universal answers to problems which occur in schools but we can identify particular answers to particular problems. Our effort must concentrate there.

f) Schools as 'Humane, Learning Communities'

The informal responses of students as well as research studies such as those by Campbell and Robinson (1979), leave no doubt as to the importance of personal relationships in a school, particularly those between students and teachers. While good personal relationships do not necessarily accompany better performance, they may be a pre-requisite for it. They are, of course, worthwhile ends in themselves. It is clearly a much more difficult task to build such relationships now, with the problems mentioned before in student motivation and with the ambiguous attitude to authority which exists in our society. We seem often to ask for strong leadership and to resent it when it occurs.

An important aspect of such relationships is the guidance experienced in relation to educational and vocational choices. For many students these choices are made early in the secondary school, at a time when they have insufficient experience and information. While counsellors of various kinds can assist, teachers and parents will play a key part in the provision of appropriate advice.

g) Curriculum Relevance

There is a great deal of talk about curriculum relevance, talk which is often unhelpful as no-one advocates curriculum irrelevance. There is, however, a strong argument for taking account in curriculum planning of what students perceive to be useful. This is in no sense to suggest that the curriculum should be limited to this, but rather that it should be a starting point. It is a tragedy that students see so much of what they are doing as having

no relationship to the important issues of their lives. Some of the work done in Transition Education has value for the whole curriculum in this respect.

Conclusion

It is easy to accept the idea that the current situation is the fault of the schools. It is not. Our society has changed in drastic and, sometimes, irreversible ways. It is unfair and unrealistic to expect schools to cope with such changes on their own, or without help. However, provided we are realistic in our expectations of what schools can do, there is little doubt that what is best in our schools provides a pattern for future success.

The change in mood from the 1960s to the 1980s is rather ironic in relation to schools. In the optimistic 1960s the schools were seen as capable of solving every social problem. In the more pessimistic 1980s they are more often described as being responsible for those problems. Neither approach is realistic or helpful. Schools, like other elements of society, feel the effects of social change and make their own contribution to those effects. However, changes in the availability and the use of technology, in the structure of employment, in the abuse of drugs, in patterns of family life, in the acceptance of authority are all aspects of fundamental alterations in the ways of living and the beliefs held as to what is worthwhile in life. Schools can neither be held responsible for it nor can they change those patterns on their own. They can, however, given the appropriate support from the community, make substantial contributions towards building a better society. It is in a realistic assessment of those contributions, and a development of means of implementing them, that the task of the future lies for our schools.

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HIGHER EDUCATION AND YOUTH POLICY

by

*Don Anderson**

The original brief for this paper requested a discussion of the contribution which higher education is making or could make as a component of a comprehensive youth policy. On reflection, the reverse question is the more interesting one; that is, what will be the effect on higher education of the implementation of a youth policy? First, however, what can higher education contribute?

Assuming that a central feature of any youth policy is to provide all young people with satisfactory roles in employment, education and training, higher education makes a substantial contribution. There are more than one-third of a million students in Australian universities and colleges of advanced education - about half in each, and a little more than half of the total in full-time studies. This is obviously a substantial contribution to education and training; at a more mundane level, each year higher education delays the entry to the labour market for some 3 to 6 years of 47,000 young people who become full-time students - roughly 15 per cent of the age group. Oddly enough there has been a decline, coinciding with the onset of high youth unemployment, in the number of young people transferring more or less directly from school to full-time higher education. In 1981, for example, there were 2,200 fewer new students under 19 years of age than in 1977. Most of them were males. There is no simple explanation of this decline - it is hypothesised by some that anxiety about employment, including the publicity given to graduate unemployment, caused able school leavers to take jobs that were available rather than undergo several years of study and then risk not getting work. A substantial increase in the proportion of new entrants to universities and CAEs who started their courses part-time (20 per cent in 1977, 26 per cent in 1981) suggests that more young people are having a bit each way on education and employment. A related consideration is the decline in the amount of financial assistance available to students. According to Learning and Earning:

> In 1975 about two-thirds of all full-time undergraduate students received some student assistance and half of this was not means-tested. By 1981 less than half of the full-time undergraduate students were in receipt of student aid and almost all of it was subject to a means test. The significant change which has taken place is the phasing out of non-means tested awards, mainly awards for prospective teachers. These awards provided allowances which were independent of parents' incomes. They also provided future employment guarantees.[1]

On considerations of equity and efficiency, an overall policy for providing roles in education and employment should be targeted at those groups of young people who are most at risk; for example, those from

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poor families. On this score higher education does not appear to make a distinctive contribution. In a review of research over a 50-year period which Aat Vervoorn and I completed recently we concluded:

> ... that higher education in general and universities in particular remain socially elite institutions. The over-representation of students from high socio-economic backgrounds has remained constant at least since 1950, as has the under-representation of those of lower socio-economic background.[2]

It is perhaps unreasonable to expect too much in this regard from higher education since most of the sorting out and sifting of students according to social class has occurred before the point of transition from school to university or CAE. There are, nevertheless, a few things which need to be watched. One is financial assistance - the level of grants and conditions on which they are available. Recent reports suggest that there are students who are precluded from full-time higher education because of the cost of maintaining themselves. A report prepared for the AVCC recommended, among other things, that institutions should have funds so that loans can be made to students in special need.[3]

A more radical approach to financial assistance is taken in a discussion paper by Peter Wilenski. In place of the various existing schemes of financial assistance for young people (TEAS, the dole, transition allowances, secondary allowances, family allowances) a youth allowance is proposed. Several models of a universal allowance are put forward and discussed in the paper.[4] (See Abstract 83/AB:69).

Apart from financial considerations which place limits for some on accessibility to higher education, the method of selection for entry to universities and CAEs which is in general use is discriminatory. Admission in most institutions is based on the aggregate marks from a higher school certificate or its equivalent. In the last few years the competition for entry has not been too intense but, as we shall see below, entry to many courses will shortly return to the highly competitive competition of the 1960s. Because of the way aggregated examination marks are distributed there is a concentration of applicants around the cut-off point for admission to quotas and a few marks can make a big difference to a student's position on the list of what is euphemistically referred to as the 'order-of-merit' for entry. Students who sit for the entrance exam a second time are, on average, likely to increase their marks to a point which substantially over-estimates their likely university performance compared with a student sitting for the first time.[5] Since second attempt students are predominantly from private schools and better off backgrounds there are questions to be asked concerning, not only the predictive validity of entrance lists, but also social equity.

Of far greater importance in the democratisation of higher education is the question of getting all able students to the starting-gate. The university participation rates for the top third and the bottom third of the social order have been approximately 15 per cent and 3 per cent respectively.[6] Closer to the extremes the discrepancy is much greater. As mentioned above most of the social attrition occurs before the point of entry to higher education. One of the structural features of Australian secondary education which inhibits more representative participation in higher education is the dual system of public and private

schools. The latter, especially non-Catholic private schools, tend to concentrate on providing an academic curriculum for students destined for higher education, particularly universities. School leavers from non-Catholic private schools are five times more likely to attend university than leavers from public schools. Public schools, almost all of which attempt to provide a comprehensive program, have their task of maintaining an academic curriculum made more difficult by the 'creaming-off' by private schools of students of demonstrated academic potential. Since participation in private schools is limited by selection and by ability to pay the fees, the main track to higher education tends to be more socially biased than it would be if the dual system did not operate.

The recently announced Commonwealth guidelines provided for a modest increase of 3,000 in enrolments at universities and CAEs. Of significance however is the statement that

> The Government looks to all institutions for a positive response to the provision of additional opportunities, a wider range of opportunities for young people and/or special efforts to attract those social groups at present under-represented among those benefiting from higher education.

and the instruction to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission that, in making its recommendations, it

> ... should give particular weight to proposals which take account of the Government's concern to increase the participation of Australians from disadvantaged groups (including Aboriginals, migrants, low income groups, women and the handicapped), especially those who live in outer-metropolitan areas where there are large populations with relatively little access to higher education. While additional funds have been provided, the Commission should seek to ensure that wherever appropriate, additional intakes are accommodated within existing funds.

For the longer run the Government's guidelines to CTEC point to some interesting future directions. There is to be an analysis of the supply and demand for higher education places, including the extent to which there is an unsatisfied demand from qualified students. With respect to equality of access the CTEC is required

> ... to bring forward recommendations proposing ways of achieving rapid, substantial and sustained reductions in the mismatch between the composition of society and the social composition of tertiary institutions, individual faculties and the tertiary sector as a whole. Recommendations should pay attention to the present nature of requirements for entry, especially the use of exam-based credentials and possible alternatives to them, the provision of bridging, remedial or introductory courses and the provision of facilities such as counselling services, support groups and transport arrangements to meet the special needs of disadvantaged groups. Options should also cover

the extent to which further developments of off-campus study facilities would increase opportunities for young Australians and others seeking tertiary qualifications.

In the immediate future, however, most attention is directed, not to higher education, but to TAFE and schools. The Government has announced a new Participation and Equity Program for 1984 'to encourage young people over the school leaving age to participate in useful and fulfilling education and training activities in schools and TAFE. This program will be the centrepiece of the overall framework of youth policies that the Government is developing'. The Program is to be directed particularly to secondary schools with low retention rates - it will have the dual objective of increasing participation in education and of providing for greater equity in overall government provision for young people.

It is at this point that higher education may indirectly cause problems for the implementation of a youth policy. Despite the best efforts of many educationists, higher education profoundly influences programs in secondary schools, including programs for students who are not destined for further academic study. Because the prizes from university qualifications have been glittering relative to those attained by non-graduates, substantial pressures are brought on secondary schools to educate with entrance to higher education as the aim. In years gone by students with low level achievement have been 'cooled out' leaving the final year or two of secondary school as a period of academic preparation. With the recent attention being given to those, who a few years back, would have left early, there is a tension in schools between the traditional academic program and so-called alternative programs (the label is significant). By and large secondary school teachers are more favourably inclined to academic courses and academic students; and many parents and students are similarly inclined.

The sharp upturn in 1984 of students staying on in upper levels of secondary school and the Government's intention to further increase retention will lead to a very significant increase in the number of students who qualify for higher education. The resulting demand for enrolment, amplified by the backlog from the last few years, will be considerably in excess of the places which are available. Universities and colleges will be forced to re-impose the strict admission quotas of earlier years. The competitive pressure for entry will have effects back in the secondary school and will add to the difficulty of maintaining a suitable mainstream program for the many non-academic students who are not destined for higher education in the traditional sense.

The Government has signalled its intention of possibly increasing participation in higher education in the future beyond the additional 3,000 for 1984. This would help ease the competitive pressures. Expansion alone, however, will not do a great deal to reduce the 'mismatch between the social composition of society and the social composition of tertiary institutions, individual faculties and the tertiary sector as a whole'. Past experience has shown that, insofar as universities are concerned, when extra places are provided, it is those next in the social order who gain enrolment rather than the groups who are least represented. In order for there to be equitable participation by those groups which the Guidelines refer to as disadvantaged - Aborigines, migrants, low income groups, women and the handicapped -

there will need to be positive discrimination as well as expansion of the secondary and tertiary sectors.

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FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR TEENAGERS**

by

*Duncan Ironmonger**

The Australian system of social security for teenagers consists of an arbitrary set of limits, barriers and jumps with little rhyme or reason. Under it, staying on at school or going on to college or university instead of taking a job or the dole imposes a severe income penalty, so that only those teenagers who are fortunate enough to have strong family support can afford to make the choice to continue with their education on a full-time basis. The deepening recession in employment opportunities is having perverse effects on educational participation. Evidence suggests that many teenagers with higher abilities, who might otherwise have considered proceeding to higher education, are leaving earlier to obtain the first job available.

It is my firm belief that the payment of a universal youth allowance to all teenagers from 13 to 19 inclusive would be a more sensible structure for the income support of young people than the present dog's breakfast of income allowances for this age group. The allowance should be available for all in these transition ages whether at school, in other education or unemployed, but it should be reduced by $1 for every $2 earned or otherwise received as cash income by the individual concerned. For the first two ages (13 and 14 years) it should be paid to the bank account of the young person's mother (as with the present family allowance). From 15 years the allowance should be paid direct to the bank account of the young person.

At What Rates Should the Allowance Be Paid?

I do not propose that the community take over the full responsibility of parents to pay for the costs of all items of food, clothing, shelter, warmth, education, health, transport, entertainment, etc. of young people. The proposal is that the small flat rate of universal family allowance (currently $5.26 to $10.51 per week for teenage adults regardless of age), and the unemployment benefit (currently zero at age 15, $40 at ages 16 and 17, and $68.65 at ages 18 and 19) should be replaced by an allowance with the same rate whether the young person is in education or unemployed. The rate of this universal youth allowance should be adjusted upwards on each young person's birthday to form a progressive transition from family support to community support.

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The following table shows how a universal allowance starting at $10 per week at age 13 and progressing by $10 per week on each birthday would look in comparison with the present system.

Table 1

Youth Allowances: Rates per week $ (1983)

Age	Present System			Proposed System	
	Family Allowance[a]		Unemployment Benefit[b]	Family Allowance[a]	Youth Allowance[b]
	Minimum	Maximum			
	Children				
13	5.26	10.51	-	10.00	-
14	5.26	10.51	-	20.00	-
15	5.26	10.51	-	-	30.00
	Students		Non-students		
16	5.26	10.51	40.00	-	40.00
17	5.26	10.51	40.00	-	50.00
18	5.26	10.51	68.65	-	60.00
19	5.26	10.51	68.65	-	70.00

Notes: a. Paid to Mother of child

b. Paid to the young person

The proposal for higher family allowances for students aged 13 and 14 is worth further consideration; costs of maintaining children in the first two years of their 'teens' whilst they are proceeding through secondary school are almost certainly far greater than for younger children in primary school or at home. Greater community support for parents supporting 13 and 14 year olds would be more equitable than the present system of family allowances which pays no regard to the age of children and students. The present system of paying higher allowances in respect of multiple child families does not take care of this element of family costs.

A feature of the proposal is that from the 15th birthday the allowance is paid direct to the young person, the payment of family allowance to the mother of the student cutting out at this point. Although many young people start to obtain a small independent income through part-time work at around this age, the pressure to do so would be reduced. The weekly cash 'pocket-money' allowance from parents is also an element of the income of most 15 year olds. Obviously with the family allowance cutting out and a somewhat greater youth allowance beginning on the 15th birthday there is an opportunity and even a need to re-negotiate family financial

arrangements over pocket money, entertainment and transport expenses, and so on for the young person.

The payment of a weekly allowance of $30 or $40 to a teenager from age 15 onwards would provide an important, though limited, recognition of independence - one which is likely to be an important element in encouraging young people to continue full-time education. At the same time, the financial attractions of full-time employment would be greatly reduced. The prospect that at each birthday between 16 to 18 the youth allowance would increase by around $10 a week would also induce many more young people to take a longer view of the relative benefits and costs of continued education.

Costs of a Universal Youth Allowance

How do the costs of a youth allowance scheme compare with the cost of existing schemes for community transfers (benefits) to young people? We can cost the scheme for 1981, the latest year for which we have reasonably complete figures. On the 1981 basis of an allowance of $25 per week at 15 years, $35 at 16, $45 at 17, $55 at 18 and $65 at 19 years being paid to some 680,000 young people either in full-time education or unemployed, the total youth allowance payments would have been $1400 million in 1981. Under the youth allowance scheme a saving in 1981 of $116 million in family allowances and $184 million in unemployment benefits could be offset against this charge. The youth allowance could also replace most if not all of the education assistance scheme payments of some $145 million in 1981 to 15 to 19 year olds. A further saving of some $175 million would follow if allowances were reduced by $1 for every $2 of teenage part-time earnings. This gives an <u>apparent</u> net cost in 1981 of $780 million.

The qualification 'apparent' is important, for the calculation assumes the number of participants would have been all those participating in full-time education or unemployed in 1981. However, young people and their parents would respond to the existence of the universal youth allowance by changing their education, employment and unemployment participation rates. This would undoubtedly increase the recorded net budget costs of the scheme but long term benefits would also follow from increased educational participation and reduced levels of unemployment.

Response to a Universal Youth Allowance

It is not clear how quickly or how far education, employment and unemployment participation percentages would change following the introduction of a universal youth allowance scheme for 15 to 19 year olds.

I believe that a youth allowance of modest proportions and available to all young people from the age of 15 to 19 would <u>eventually</u> induce a significant increase in the education participation rates of those aged 15 to 19 and a significant reduction in the labour force participation rates of those young people. Instead of the present participation rates, <u>after a few years</u> participation rates could well move as follows:

Table 2

Youth Participation Rates (per cent)

Age	Present		Future	
	Education	Labour Force	Education	Labour Force
15	90	8	97	-
16	63	33	84	12
17	43	53	70	26
18	22	73	53	42
19	15	77	36	56

These rates are approximations and are based on classifying young people by their major activity. Changes in participation rates of these proportions would mean that at any point in time there would be about 290,000 additional students in education and training. Most of these would be in technical and secondary education: only a few would be additional tertiary students in universities and colleges of advanced education. These 290,000 would result in a greatly reduced labour force participation - the numbers aged 15 to 19 in the labour force would be reduced from about 650,000 at present to 360,000.

In turn this would result in an increase in employment for adults aged 20 to 64: first, by the direct replacement in jobs of about 164,000 teenagers at present in full-time employment; second, by the employment of about 17,000 additional secondary and tertiary teachers, and, third, by the indirect effects of the additional employment needed to supply goods and services resulting from the change.

We should note that the 'future' rates for Australian education proposed as an 'eventual' outcome of the youth allowance scheme are still below the 1976 rates for Japan and the United States.

Where would these additional students come from? My answer is that nearly all of them would 'come from' jobs. That really means that they would not have entered into full-time employment so early in their careers. This sort of change in education participation rates by young people would mean a sustained reduction in the number of unemployed by more than 290,000 - a reduction in recorded unemployed of about 40 per cent.

Education Response

The potential future percentage rates of full-time education for ages 15 to 19, although below the 1976 rates for Japan and the United States, are a substantial advance on the rates for Australia in 1981. Applying these rates to the 1981 population single age cohorts gives a potential 293,000 additional full-time students in the 15 to 19 year group as follows:

Table 3

Potential Change in Education Participation (thousand)

	Age 15	16	17	18	19	Total 15-19
Students	216	156	109	56	43	580
Additional students	26	55	74	85	53	293
New total in education	242	211	183	141	96	873

This is a 50 per cent increase in the numbers aged 15 to 19 in full-time education.

There are various ways in which the co-ordination of the introduction of a youth allowance scheme could be dovetailed into the co-ordination of additional courses and facilities required to meet the additional demand. For example, the scheme could be introduced in stages over five years. In year 1, the aim could be to increase the participation rate for 15 year olds to 97 per cent (an extra 26,000); in year 2, the rate for 16 year olds (an extra 55,000) and so on. The greatest effort would be required in year 4 when the aim would be to provide for an additional 85,000 18 year olds. Under that strategy the youth allowance would be made available progressively first for 15 year olds, then 16 years, and so on; courses, facilities, and staff would need to be expanded each year over the five-year period concentrating on a particular level and type of curriculum.

Employment and Unemployment Response

I believe that nearly all the additional participation in education by 15 to 19 year olds would be at the 'expense of' participation in jobs. For example, if an additional 26,000 15 year olds participated in education, I would expect the present figures of 18,000 full-time employed and 18,000 unemployed 15 year olds could be reduced to 12,000 employed and nil unemployed. In effect, 18,000 employed 15 year olds move to education leaving 18,000 jobs to be filled, but 8,000 of the unemployed also move to education so only 12,000 of the 18,000 vacated jobs would be filled by 15 year olds. This would mean some 6,000 jobs would need to be filled by older aged employees.

In reality, this is not a process of moving back or re-tracing steps. It is a process of movement through time with a new cohort of 15 year olds making sets of decisions different from those of the previous years' 15 year olds, and so on.

Calculating all the steps in this process gives the possibility of eliminating unemployment for those aged 15 to 19 as follows:

Table 4

Potential Change in Employment Participation (thousand)

	Age 15	16	17	18	19	Total 15-19
Current Employed Full-time	18	66	117	157	173	532
Current Unemployed	18	27	28	30	25	128
Future Employed Full-time	12	38	71	102	145	368

Thus some 164,000 jobs would need to be filled by those aged 20 and more.

I conclude therefore that a strategy to provide a universal youth allowance combined with a strategy on the education front to provide appropriate places in technical and secondary schools - with probably some additional courses in colleges - would enable a shift of nearly 300,000 young people, by their own choice, from participating full-time in today's labour market to participating in a more adequate educational preparation for the labour market demands of tomorrow.

To me this would provide a more sensible structure of financial incentive for teenagers than the present one.

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A YOUTH ALLOWANCE: THE ISSUES**

by

*Meredith Edwards**

Introduction

It is generally agreed that reform is needed in the structure of youth allowances: there is complexity in the current structure and yet there appears no clear rationale to justify that complexity. Recently, many commentators on youth policy have proposed not only a rationalisation of payments to young people, but also a single 'youth allowance' (for example, Irongmonger, 1983; Shears and Mathews, 1983; Wilenski, 1983). Few of the proponents of a youth allowance, however, have examined the proposal in any detail. Ironmonger is one that has; he advocates, in effect, a guaranteed minimum income for youth - an allowance payable to all youth except those in full-time employment. Ironmonger details his proposal elsewhere in this Newsletter (see also Abstracts 83/AB:67-69).

This paper has two purposes. The first is to explain the differences that currently exist between the main types of youth payment and to highlight some of the inequities and unintended incentive effects. The second is to raise a series of questions which require an answer before the direction of reform can be decided upon. The series of questions raised assumes that the form of rationalisation being considered is a single youth allowance. It does need to be remembered, however, that there may be good reasons for reform which retains in simplified form different payments for different purposes. Throughout, concentration is on the 15-19 age group.

TEAS, SAS and UB Compared

There are several forms of financial assistance provided to young people, each with its own set of conditions. Not only is there a range of educational allowances for which young people are eligible, but there is also a range of employment and training allowances and a range of income security payments. Appendix A details the range of payments available. This section concentrates on the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS),[1] the Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS), and Unemployment Benefits (UB). The major differences can be summarised as follows:

- TEAS and UB are paid to young people directly; SAS is paid to parents
- UB is income-tested on the recipient's income; SAS is income

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** I wish to thank officers of the Department of Education and Youth Affairs for comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Responsibility for errors remains mine.

tested on parents' income and TEAS is income tested on parents' income and income of the recipient.

- The SAS and TEAS income tests are applied to the combined income of parents in the previous financial year and, for TEAS, estimated student income for the current year; the UB income test relies on income in the previous week.
- The maximum payment for an unemployed 16-17 year old (currently at $40 p.w.) is more than twice the maximum payment for a 16-17 year old who remains at school and who attracts SAS (currently a maximum of $16.75 p.w.). A differential also exists between TEAS and UB: a TEAS student living at home receives $38.65 p.w.; UB for a single person aged 18 years and over is $68.65 p.w.
- The family allowance payment is paid for a young person on SAS or TEAS (incorporated into the TEAS payment) but not for a young person on UB. Further, parents as taxpayers are eligible to claim a concessional rebate for the educational expenses of SAS and TEAS students; there is no equivalent tax rebate for parents whose children are unemployed.[2]
- The amount of income a young person can earn before payment starts to be withdrawn is much less for UB ($10 p.w.) than for TEAS (equivalent of $38.50 p.w.). The student's income does not affect the income at which the SAS payment is withdrawn. Further, past a certain point the rate of withdrawal of UB is much steeper (50 per cent until an income of $60 p.w. whereupon a 100 per cent withdrawal rate applies) than the TEAS withdrawal rate (50 per cent throughout)
- A living-away-from-home allowance is paid as part of TEAS but not for UB.

The above differences imply certain assumptions about the economic and social behaviour of young people. For example, a young person who continues in education is assumed to be more dependent on his or her parents than a TEAS student, who in turn, is assumed to be more dependent than the person who is unemployed.[3] A student's willingness to study is assumed to be matched by a parent's willingness to support a student; the costs of support are assumed to be greater for TEAS students than for SAS students; and TEAS students are assumed to be more likely to rely on part-time earnings as well as family support than are students who attract SAS.

Dramatic economic and social changes over the past decade make many of these assumptions questionable. Not only has there been a sharp increase in the rate of unemployment but there has been a significant change in the labour force behaviour of young people - particularly in the proportion of young people seeking part-time employment. There has also been a change in educational participation patterns and in the living arrangements of young people.

It could be argued that the current range of youth allowances is based on assumptions which, if not outmoded, certainly are now out of tune with recent economic and social changes. As a result, inequities and unintentional incentive effects have arisen.

Inequities: To a large extent inequities reflect ad hoc development. Within one tertiary institution such as TAFE, a student could be receiving one of a number of payments, each with different levels of benefit and/or conditions. For example, a student could receive TEAS with or without a living-away-from-home allowance, or TEAS as the independent rate or SAS or even unemployment benefit, let alone other payments such as an Aboriginal Study Grant or a supporting parent's benefit. In one household, a 16 year-old could be in receipt of UB and have a substantial degree of independence of parents, while his or her older brother or sister, as a student, could be totally reliant on family support.

A more intractable inequity has been argued by Beswick et al.(1983) and others. People with the same ability and willingness to pursue further education could have unequal access to education because one has parents who are eligible for educational allowances while the other does not.[4] A related point is that the use of parents' income in determining a student's eligibility for an educational allowance (while the best objective measure we have of capacity to pay) is not necessarily a good measure of whether parents are willing to support a young person in education (Maglen, 1979; Beswick et al., 1983).

Incentives/Disincentives: Some of the unintentional incentive or disincentive effects of the present structure of payments are as follows:

- The unemployment benefit system discourages recipients from undertaking (or declaring) much part-time work. One consequence appears to have been an increase in part-time work undertaken by school children (Gregory and Duncan, 1980).[5]
- The differences in eligibility conditions for UB and TEAS provide an economic incentive for young people from higher income families (who are not eligible for TEAS) to remain on UB. Either they are discouraged from continuing in education or else they proceed slowly enough not to disqualify themselves from receiving UB:

  > A person who cannot get TEAS can get unemployment benefits if she drops a subject or two at university, taking longer to complete a degree, getting more allowance each week, and costing the nation more overall (plus being only partly occupied). (McKinnon, 1982).

- A related distortion in the payment structure relates to the tightness of the income test on TEAS. The tighter the income test, the higher the proportion of students who will attempt to attain independent status from their parents.
- The structure of TEAS payments may affect decisions to marry. Until 1981, there was an incentive for young people who wanted to be eligible for TEAS, but whose parents' income would otherwise disqualify them, to cohabit, and in this way be eligible for TEAS on an independent basis. Since 1981, only formally married students are able to obtain such assistance, and the incentive could be said to be correspondingly in favour of 'marriages of convenience'.
- Finally, income tests on payment can have a distorting effect on the workforce participation of family members, particularly mothers. A mother who is in paid employment in order to add

to an otherwise inadequate family income may be induced to give up her job so that her child is eligible for SAS or TEAS. High effective marginal tax rates (which can exceed 100 per cent and so cause a 'poverty trap') result from the interaction of the marginal tax rate with the withdrawal rate on educational allowances and unemployment benefits.

A Youth Allowance - Questions to Address

In the light of the above inequities and perverse incentive effects of the current system of allowances, it is not surprising that there has been a call for fundamental restructuring. This section presents some of the more important questions which need to be answered before the appropriate form of any youth allowance (or set of youth allowances) can be determined.

- For whom?

  A critical question to ask at the outset is whether a youth allowance should be universally provided and paid to all youth or whether it should be confined to young people whose family income is low. That is, should there be an income test on parent income, as with TEAS and SAS at present, or should the allowance be independent of parent income as UB presently is? Which way the system moves would have major equity, incentive and cost implications. This question raises the issue of whether any proposed uniform payment would be an incentive payment or a welfare payment, or whether the payment structure should, in fact, reflect a combination of these functions.

- For what purpose?

  Perhaps the most crucial question to answer (whether or not a payment is income tested) is what type of youth activities should attract a payment? How wide should Government make the choice open to youth? Is education or training sufficiently in the interests of potential school leavers for Government to withhold financial assistance to youth unless they pursue these activities? Or is the unemployment rate so unacceptable that youth should be subsidised to take up activities that will not necessarily add to their training or skills? To answer the question, For What Purpose? needs a clear formulation of the objectives of a youth allowance.

- Who is to pay?

  The answer to the above question will determine who effectively pays for the allowance. For example, if the allowance were paid to all young people except those in full-time employment (the Ironmonger variety) then it would be paid for by taxpayers including young taxpayers in full-time employment. In this case there would be some redistribution from one group of young people to another. The narrower the coverage, the less tax rates would need to rise and the lower the burden on higher-income earners. Who is to Pay? raises the issue of whether payments to youth should be part of an intergenerational transfer of income.

. To whom?

Who is to receive payment: parent or young person? The allowance could be paid directly to the young person (as with UB and TEAS) or it could be paid direct to the parent (as is the case with SAS). The issue here is the extent to which age, the type of payment, and the type of education training or labour force activity should affect the recipient unit. Should young people in post-compulsory education be treated as young adults or should they be treated more like older children? Unfortunately there are no data available on the consequences for financial arrangements within families of using one recipient unit rather than another.

. To replace what?

One of the objectives of any reform of the youth allowance structure would be to achieve greater simplicity. A youth allowance would presumably replace UB, TEAS, and SAS, but to what extent would it replace other payments? What would be the relationship between any proposed youth allowance and the family allowance payment, for instance? Would the family allowance payment be transferred to children or would it be abolished for any child aged 16 and over and absorbed into the youth allowance? If family allowance were to be paid to the young person rather than to his or her parents, at what rate (given that the family allowance payment depends on the birth order of the child)? What about additional pension and benefit for children or the Family Income Supplement? (These payments are made for dependent children up to the age of 25 if they are still dependent on their parents). What about the sole parent benefit, the invalid pension, the sickness benefit for which young people aged 16 and over are eligible as individuals in their own right, even if they are students? How would a youth allowance cater for young people who were married?

. Why youth?

If a youth allowance were paid to young people, the question has to be asked: why is the allowance confined only to youth; why is it not also given to others who wish to study in acknowledgement of the principle that education is a life-long concept? If the allowance were in the form of a guaranteed minimum income for youth, including youth not in education or in the labour force, then why not go further and make a payment to women who stay at home to care for children; indeed, why not a guaranteed income for all?

Conclusion

Other questions could be asked, for example, whether age should be a variable determining the level of allowance paid (as well as determining who receives it) and whether a living-away-from-home allowance should be paid to unemployed young people and, if so, whether the rate should be equal to, greater than, or less than that received by students in education or training.

Enough questions have been raised in this paper to suggest that there are many different ways in which rationalisation could take place. A

youth allowance, as one form of rationalisation, can have different meanings for different people and may not be as simple as it might first appear, either in its application or its impact.

FOOTNOTES

1. For simplicity in the comparisons which follow, it is assumed that a TEAS student is a dependent student living at home.

2. Another difference is that UB is taxable; SAS and TEAS are not.

3. And a student receiving the Transition Allowance (UB plus $6.00 p.w.) is assumed to be more independent of parents than a TEAS student.

4. Evidence suggests that girls in higher income families are particularly likely to be affected (Beswick et al., 1983).

5. This includes SAS students as well as other students because the SAS income test does not take into account the student's income.

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APPENDIX A

YOUTH ALLOWANCES AND INCOME SUPPORT: RELEVENT EXISTING PROGRAMS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA BY DEPARTMENT

Type of Payment	Eligibility Criteria	Payment Level
A. MAJOR COMMONWEALTH PROGRAMS OF CASH ASSISTANCE TO OR FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR UNEMPLOYED		
Department of Education and Youth Affairs		
1. Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme	Available to full-time tertiary students who have not previously attempted study at a corresponding level	. Living Allowance - Students living at home $2,010 per year - Independent students and dependent students living away from home $3,100 per year Means tested. . Incidentals Allowance up to $100 per year . Dependents' Allowance $4,270 per year for a dependent spouse and $10 per week for each child . Fares Allowance. For students living away from home (3 return journeys per year)
2. Secondary Allowances Scheme	To help low income families to keep their children in school for years 11 and 12	Up to $871 per year per student income tested; families with one eligible student and adjusted family income greater than $15,677 per year would receive no support.
Department of Employment and Industrial Relations		
3. Transition Allowance and Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY)	Available to two classes of trainees . 15 to 19 year olds (15-24 years for EPUY), who have been unemployed and away from full-time education for 4 months in the last 12, attending approved full-time Commonwealth and State funded TAFE transition courses	Equivalent to UB + $6 per week Books and equipment allowance of $30 per course. Living away from home allowance, moving allowances, other fares assistance provisions also apply

Type of Payment	Eligibility Criteria	Payment Level
	. 15 to 24 year olds, who have been unemployed and away from full-time education for 8 months in the last 12 attending other approved full-time State funded TAFE transition courses to improve their employability	
4. General Training Assistance (Formal Training)	Available to persons with previous labour market experience who wish to train for occupations in demand and who: . are unemployed or about to be retrenched . are unable to obtain employment with current skills . are registered with the CES	Equivalent to UB plus: . $46.35 per week for trainees 18 years and over . $23.20 per week for under 18 year olds Income tested Books and equipment allowance of $375 per year, LAFHA, Moving Allowance and other fares assistance provisions also apply
5. Special Assistance Program (TAFE Placement)	Training allowance paid to out-of-trade apprentices to allow completion of TAFE basic trade courses	. Equivalent to UB + $46.35 per week for apprentices 18 years and over . $23.20 per week for under 18 year olds . May also be eligible for LAFHA and moving allowance of $20.00 per week . $57.00 per week.
6. Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA)	Payable to trainees receiving Formal Training or Transition Allowance who are required to live away from their normal home and continue to contribute to the maintenance of that home	$57.00 per week

Type of Payment	Eligibility Criteria	Payment Level
7. Pre-apprenticeship Allowance	Available to Commonweant and State Pre-apprenticeship courses when the Transition Allowance and TEAS are not available	$20.00 per week
Department of Social Security		
8. Unemployment Benefit	Income for a person out of work subject to following: . man aged 16-24 . woman aged 16-59 . available for work . actively seeking work . registered for work with CES	Single under 18 $40.00 per week Single 18 years and over and no dependents $68.65 per week Single 18 years and over with dependents $82.35 per week Married (combined) $137.30 per week (subject to indexation)
9. Family Allowances	Regular payment to person bringing up a child or children under 16 years or dependent full-time students subject to: . basic residency qualifications . income test for full-time students 16-24	1 child $22.80 per month 2 children $55.35 per month 3 children $94.35 per month 4 children $133.35 per month Additional children $45.55 each Institution $39.00 each
10. Family Income Supplement	Assistance to low income families . not in receipt of Social Security pensions or benefits . for children not receiving educational or similar allowances	
11. Additional Pension for Dependant Children	A pensioner may be eligible to receive $10 per week in addition to the basic pension for each child under 16 or dependent full-time student under 25 years of age	Additional $10 per week to basic pension

Type of Payment	Eligibility Criteria	Payment Level
B. OTHER COMMONWEALTH PROGRAMS OF SOME RELEVANCE		
Department of Education and Youth Affairs		
12. Adult Secondary Education Assistance Scheme	Intended to adult students undertaking full-time matriculation-level programs of one or two years' duration. Eligible students must: . be over 19 years of age as at 1 January of the year in respect of which assistance is sought . have not undertaken more than 3 years of secondary study in the past 5, nor have sat for a matriculation exam in the past 3 years . have not completed, within the last 5 years, any study or at any time completed a qualification at the advanced education or university level	Living Allowance up to $1,860 per year for students living at home and $2,867 per year for those living away from home. Other benefits as for TEAS
13. Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme	Available to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander who has left school and wishes to undertake an acceptable course for which he/she is suited	Full-time Students: Living allowance of $70.75 per week plus $5.25 per week for single students under 25 Dependents allowances as for TEAS Other assistance for books, equipment, fees, travel, etc. available. Part-time Students: $6.00 per week plus fees where appropriate.

Type of Payment	Eligibility Criteria	Payment Level
14. Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme	Provided for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders who are full-time secondary students or who are aged 14 years or more and attending primary school	Living Allowance at Home: Up to $17.09 for junior and $24.41 for senior secondary students for fortnight Boarding: Up to $1,954 per year in boarding schools and hostels, $27,00 per week in private homes Books and Clothing: $330 per year for juniors and $400 per year for senior secondary students Personal Allowances: $1.50 to $2.50 per week for juniors and $3-4.00 per week for senior secondary students Other assistance available for special purposes.
15. Post-graduate Awards	Available on a competitive basis for Australian residents undertaking full-time study for Masters and Ph.D degrees within Australia	Living Allowance: $6,850 per year . $520 per year for a dependent child An incidental allowance of up to $100 per year and special allowances for some other costs are provided
16. Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme	Assistance can be provided where: . children are at least 16 km from a government school and 4.5 km from transport to it; (or if less than 4.5 km from transport, but at least 56 km from school) . children must live away from home to undertake special studies or receive remedial tuition . the family is itinerant . children suffer from a disability	Boarding Allowance: Up to $2,403 per year, depending on stage of schooling, including $866 un-means tested Correspondence Allowance: $500 Second Home Allowance: Up to $2,209 per year

Type of Payment	Eligibility Criteria	Payment Level
17. Soldier's Children Education Scheme	Available to children of . deceased veterans . war widows . TPI pensioners	Stipend for children 12-16 years ranging from $10-24 per week for primary and secondary education Stipend for tertiary students $50-$100 per annum . additional costs of university fees and associated costs
Department of Social Security		
18. Special Benefit	Income for those unable to make a sufficient livelihood for themselves and dependents or not eligible for some other pension or benefit	As per unemployment/sickness benefits - discretionary in some cases
19. Sickness Benefit	Regular payment for person who loses pay while off work under same conditions of age, residency and income test as per UB. Additionally requirements as regards . temporary incapacity to work . loss of income	Under 18 years $40 per week Over 18 years $82,35 per week Married couple $137.30 per week
20. Invalid Pension	Regular income for person who is permanently blind or unable to work because of permanent incapacity. Additional allowances income tested as per age pension	Basic Pension: Single $82.35 per week Married $68.65 per week each
21. Supporting Parents' Benefits	Available to sole parent who is supporting a child Subject to income test and residence test	Basic rate $82.35 per week (plus amounts for children as per Family Allowance)

Type of Payment	Eligibility Criteria	Payment Level
22. Wife's Pension	Paid to wife of a pensioner who is . living with pensioner husband or de facto . is not an age or invalid pensioner herself; subject to income test	As ber basic pension
23. Mother's/ Guardian's Allowance	Single pensioners are eligible to receive a guardian's allowance, paid in addition to the basic pension for each dependent child in their care	Additional $8 per week for one child under six or $6 for children over 6 who are not invalids
24. Handicapped Child's Allowance	Paid with family allowance, where a child needs constant care and attention in the family home subject to . medically classified as severely handicapped; or . medically classified as handicapped and parents in financial hardship	Severely handicapped $85 per month. Substantially handicapped maximum $85 per month (income tested)
25. Double Orphans Pension	Paid with family allowance, where both the child's parents are dead or one parent is dead and whereabouts of other is unknown; paid to a long term prisoner or inmate of a mental hospital or refugee children under certain circumstances	

BEYOND THE REFUGE: INCOME SUPPORT AND PUBLIC HOUSING

by

*Justin McDermott**

Senator Margaret Guilfoyle's introduction of the Youth Services Scheme (YSS) in 1978 put the question of a youth housing policy firmly on the public agenda. Four years later this newest corner of the welfare field has constructed a range of emergency accommodation services (though insufficient to cope with the demand) and has grown considerably in its understanding of what are some quite complex issues. Even the media are getting the message that the answer to 'youth homelessness' isn't simply a matter of persuading the kids to go back home. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the youth housing field has now arrived at the same point as those grappling with the problems of youth unemployment: the realisation that the real solutions are going to be very expensive. This paper will deal with the two costliest items in the package: income security and the public housing system.

After the Refuge

The evaluation of YSS (One Step Forward, Abstract 83/C:49) contains the following recommendations:

> 2. Current income maintenance levels are not adequate to enable youth who need it to obtain and maintain independent housing. Youth receiving Unemployment Benefits who are living or need to live independently from the family should be entitled to a rent allowance adequate to meet accommodation needs.
>
> 4. A comprehensive co-ordinated youth housing policy for single persons is required. It should include provision for a range of housing types such as boarding and lodging places, flats, share houses, hostels and housing co-operatives both in the public and private sector, as appropriate. Additional provision of public sector housing will be necessary to assist youth so that they do not displace others also in need [Emphasis added].

Housing Costs and Income

Dr Duncan Ironmonger (Australian Society, July 1983) has made out a strong case for introducing a uniform 'Youth Allowance' to replace the current mess of income subsidies for young people. Its chief innovation would be to pay all secondary students to remain at school. He estimates

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the total cost at $1.4 billion or, with savings elsewhere, $780 million a year (Abstract 83/AB:68).[2]

Of course, a modest financial incentive alone will not be sufficient to prevent many young people, disillusioned with an inappropriate and even hostile school system, from voting with their feet. Education reforms are necessary particularly work/education schemes and a setting which values rather than dominates young people.

There is however one serious omission in Dr Ironmonger's proposal: housing costs. We can assume that most under-18 year-olds remain living at home. A Youth Allowance starting at $30 a week is reasonable to cover their imputed housing costs. But it is completely inadequate to cover the real costs of anyone living independently (the costs of housing, food, clothing, travel, educational expenses, etc.). These costs, which define the Poverty Line, now amount to $106.40 per week for a single person in the workforce paying for housing, or $71,60 per week for someone not paying for their housing.[3]

Principles for a Youth Income Support Policy

- There should not be a financial disincentive to young people remaining in secondary and tertiary education
- Young people should be entitled to enter the workforce at around the age of 16. If they fail to find work they should be entitled to UB
- Youth Policy should recognise the importance to young people of progressively achieving financial independence from their parents. Thus, income support policies should not be means-tested against parental income. (Nor should allowances to adult students be means-tested against spouse's income)
- Reform of general tax policy is a more sensitive and equitable way of recouping the greater benefits that tend to accrue to the middle and upper classes from non means-tested allowances and access to higher education
- Youth Policy should recognise the reality that a proportion of young people find it necessary to live independently of their parents
- Paying students marginally less than young unemployment beneficiaries can be justified on the grounds that students are receiving the additional (though usually uncosted) benefits of an education. (At one extreme, the tertiary education of a doctor is said to cost the taxpayer $30,000 a year).

The Numbers Living Independently

The number of young people living independently who are not full-time workers does not seem to be accurately known. This group comprises three large sub-groups: the young unemployed, tertiary students and secondary students.

The unemployed: Rodney Fopp estimates that in 1981 there were 12,400 unemployed 15-19 year olds and 23,900 unemployed 20-24 year olds living away from home.[4]

Tertiary students: Full-time tertiary students numbered 224,000 in 1981, of whom about 37,000 or 18 per cent were living away from home; but only 11 per cent were receiving maximum TEAS, because of means-testing and rules about 'dependence'.[5]

Secondary students: There are about 480,000 students in the 15-17 age group. The great majority live at home and receive no financial assistance, although their mothers typically receive Family Allowances of around $10 a week. A small minority are eligible for up to $20 a week for the last two years of school under the Secondary Allowance Scheme (SAS).

Formulas for Living-Away-From-Home Allowance

For simplicity, such an allowance will be described as a 'rent subsidy'. It would be payable in addition to a basic allowance consisting of either Unemployment Benefit or a Student Allowance. These are discussed below.

Unemployment Benefit would be available to those above minimum school-leaving age or with authorisation to leave school below this age. The under-18 rate would be 70 per cent of the standard pension for a single person (now $85.25 per week).[6]

A Student Allowance (replacing Family Allowances, SAS and TEAS) would be paid to all those aged 15 and over in full-time education. The allowance would not be means-tested against parental income, but would be taxable income in the hands of the recipient.

The allowance would be age-graded as a proportion of the standard pension.

Table 1

Student Allowance

Age	15	16	17	18	19	20
% of adult pension	40	50	60	70	80	100
Value ($'s)	32.90	42.13	49.35	57.58	66.26	82.25

Unemployment Benefit

Age	15	16	17	18	19	20
% of adult pension	-	70	70	100	100	100
Value of UB ($'s)	-	57.58	57.58	82.25	82.25	82.25

A Rent Subsidy would be paid to all recipients of the Student Allowance and UB who are living independently. The rent subsidy would cover private tenants, lodgers and boarders. (A formula would be used to calculate the housing component of full board; e.g. 50 per cent). To obtain a rent subsidy, an individual would have to produce a tenancy agreement showing the total rent and the number of paying tenants. The rent subsidy formula

would vary with the value of the allowance of benefit:

> People receiving 100 per cent of the standard pension would be eligible for a rent subsidy equal to 50 per cent of the amount by which their rent exceeds 20 per cent of their income.

Three formulas for dealing with juniors are:

Option A: People receiving less than 100 per cent of the pension (i.e. 15-19 year old students, and unemployed under-18 year olds) would be eligible for a rent subsidy equal to 75 per cent of the amount by which their rent exceeds 20 per cent of their income.

Table 2

Examples	Students						Unemployed	
Age	15	16	17	18	19	20+	16-17	18+
Income ($s)	32.90	42.13	49.35	57.58	66.26	82.25	57.58	82.25
Rent	$30	$30	$30	$30	$30	$30	$30	$30
Rent formula	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	50%	75%	50%
Rent subsidy ($s)	19.74	16.18	15.19	13.86	12.56	6.78	13.86	6.78
Rent as % of total income	57%	51%	47%	42%	38%	34%	42%	34%
Disposable income after rent	$22.64	28.31	34.45	41.44	48.82	59.03	41.44	59.03

In these examples, rent was arbitarily set at $30 a week. If a 16 year-old were paying only $20 rent, disposable income (after rent) would rise to $30.80 a week. If rent was $35, disposable income would fall to $27.

It is clear that this formula fails to produce an adequate after-rent income for under-18 year-old students.

Option B: All 15-17 year-old students would be paid at the junior UB rate (i.e. 70 per cent of standard pension, or $57.58 per week) once they had proved they were living independently, or needed to do so. They would then be eligible for the same rent subsidy as 16-17 year old unemployed people.

The main disadvantage is that this option depends on certain 'gate keepers' deciding who is and is not eligible. The task could be given to DSS offices acting on the advice of youth housing workers and student counsellors, but the administrative load on current youth services would be considerable and would have to be catered for.

Option C: As with rebates for public housing, rents could be subsidised down to a uniform 25 per cent or 30 per cent of income. However, this would still require a minimum allowance of $60 to leave an after-rent income of $45. Also, such a formula would allow both landlords and tenants to maximise the rent paid.[7]

Advantages of Option B: (i) The chief advantage, of course, would be to reduce poverty among young people living independently; (ii) the rent subsidy formula minimises the upwards pressure on rents, while keeping a link between income and actual housing costs; and (iii) the total cost would be far less than an across-the-board increase in statutory incomes.

Disadvantages of Option B: Conservatives will claim that any schemes to support young people living independently are intrinsically undesirable. This view happens to coincide in practice (though not necessarily in theory) with the far more powerful view that the economy cannot afford any substantial increase in the social security bill. Thirdly, many analysts of housing policy believe quite justifiably that subsidies to private tenants will cause rents to rise, given that the market is both very tight and comparatively unprofitable.[8]

In answer to this last argument, two points can be made. One is that government will have a much stronger incentive to control the private rental market (by reform of landlord/tenant legislation, rent control, incentives to landlords, and/or competition from an expanded public housing system) when the Government can see that failure to act is extremely expensive in the long run. The other point is that rent subsidies, like Unemployment Benefits, may be the lesser of two evils: it is known that being on the dole is expensive to the Government and psychologically destructive to the individual compared with having a decent job, but this is no argument for abolishing the dole.

Just as the long-term solution to unemployment is a steady expansion of available jobs, so the long-term solution to young people's housing problems is an expansion of public housing stock.

Young People and Public Housing

One of the strongest demands to emerge from the recent national workshop on youth housing (ANU, 9-11 July 1983) was that the public housing system ought to accommodate young people. Victoria's Ministry of Housing has probably made the most progress to date. It has (a) recognised over-15 year old single people as an eligible group; (b) set up a Youth Housing Program under which community groups now manage a total of 30 houses for 'medium-term' accommodation, and (c) announced a revised Group Sharing Scheme under which young people can become direct tenants of the Ministry.

The workshop, which was convened by the National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH), recommended that these sorts of innovations should be adopted by all the State housing authorities. The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, which is to be re-negotiated during 1984, is the logical place in which to develop such a national policy. The CSHA should earmark extra funds to encourage the States to produce appropriate schemes.

Some Policy Questions

Single young people of legal working age should be recognised as eligible for public housing. Youth housing policy needs to refine its understanding of the questions of: dependence/independence; stock appropriate to young people; the interface between young people, community groups and the State Housing Authorities; and the distinction between the provision of stock and the provision of personal support services.

Discussion

How many young people are capable of living independently? It all depends. The very unstable living arrangements of those coming into contact with refuges are the result of a number of coinciding factors: lack of money, discrimination by landlords, inexperience in living independently, unresolved family conflicts, and so on. The advantage of the public housing system is that it can eliminate some of these disruptive factors, because it can ensure: low access costs (no bonds), no discrimination, low rents (because of rebates), security of tenure, and responsive management (especially in rental co-operatives). And in the long run it can do all this at declining cost to both the tenant and the taxpayer, if a 'cost rent' policy is re-introduced.[9]

Should young people rent directly from the State Housing Authority, or should they be in 'supported' or 'medium term' accommodation managed and/or staffed by community groups? Again, there is no single answer, and a youth housing policy must allow for a variety of models.

Some young people are perfectly capable of accepting the responsibilities of direct tenure. Thousands already do so in the private rental sector. What often confuses the issue, however, is the lack of appropriate stock: shared housing is usually the only form available, but many young people want to live on their own. Their inability to sustain a group tenancy is interpreted as an inability to live independently, though the opposite is more likely the case. Living in a group can be regarded as requiring more skills in controlling one's environment and negotiating with other people (over rent payment, domestic routines, behaviour of friends) than living alone or in pairs. More appropriate stock, particularly single-person accommodation, is therefore urgently needed.

There is also considerable confusion in the field over the question of tenure, which will only be cleared up through experimentation. Government policies should not pre-empt such development by insisting on community groups being the landlord (or 'head tenant') in all youth housing services using public stock.

A youth housing policy should distinguish between (a) the provision of housing stock, and (b) the provision of personal support. When a community organisation controls the housing stock (e.g. as 'head tenant') the distinction becomes hard to make. Often this is counter-productive to the stated objective of helping young people make the transition to independent living. Their security of tenure becomes dependent on their participation in welfare support programs. This is in complete contrast to the support services offered to, say, families. A single parent living in public housing will not be evicted because she was judged to be uncooperative by the Family Therapist or Financial Counsellor. These support

services are regarded as quite separate from the provision of housing.

These problems can be overcome by improving the interface between young people and the public housing system, such that community groups are better able to sponsor young people (both singly and in groups) into direct tenure, while expanding the support services available to them. Two organisations which have developed this 'externally supported' model are Stepping Stone in Hobart and The Chain, operated by the Hope Street Shelter in Brunswick, Melbourne. The involvement of young people in Rental Housing Co-operatives is another way in which personal support can be combined with the development of skills in self-management.

The Youth Services Scheme (YSS or YASP), which is the major program funding the community-based youth housing services, is currently restricted to 'emergency' accommodation services. The scheme's guidelines should be extended to cover the employment of Youth Housing Officers whose roles might include the provision of open-ended support to young people in independent or semi-independent housing in both the public and private rental sectors (i.e. the 'Chain' or 'Stepping Stone' model).

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   Para.1.32: 'Whether or not the students were receiving a TEAS allowance was the best predictor of whether they would continue or withdraw (from education)'.

   AUS recommends that TEAS should be increased to the Poverty Line and should not be means-tested against parental or spouse income. The interim recommendation is that TEAS be increased to its 1974 real value which would not be roughly equivalent to the adult UB rate of $68.65. Maximum TEAS is now $59.62 per week. See Students and Financing: a submission to the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee from the Australian Union of Students and the Federation of College Academics, October 1982.

6. See Recommendation 10 of the Summary Report of the Victorian Government Income Security Task Force, December 1982.

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RHETORIC IS FINE ... BUT DELIVERY IS ANOTHER THING: PERSPECTIVES ON A YOUTH POLICY FOR AUSTRALIA**

by

*Paul G. Baker**

This paper is not a full discussion on the question of Youth Policy. This has been adequately covered by Denis Davis (1983) in a previous Newsletter (May 1983). The paper contains opinions of the author drawn from personal experience over an 18-year period with all types of programs directed at the unemployed young both in Australia and overseas. It has been written to stimulate discussion and present experience rather than to be prescriptive.

At the time of preparing this paper the author participated in the Learning and Earning Conference at Toowoomba, where Youth Policy was discussed. Hence the scope of the paper has to some extent been shaped by this conference.

Youth Policy: An Introduction

Youth Policy is not readily defined. Often it is discussed in a framework of Why give priority to youth? Frequently the terms 'Co-ordinated', 'Comprehensive', 'Integrated' and 'Guarantee' are added - sometimes interchangeably, most times through lack of awareness - to either support or reject one style of Youth Policy or another.

All of the abovementioned approaches are Youth Policy. The extent to which they are 'comprehensive' depends on the focus of the approach. Is it Education, Training or Employment? Does it include questions of law, health, recreation, accommodation, finance, etc.? 'Co-ordination' is mostly a question of delivery and there are various 'levels' of machinery - National, State and local - to be considered. 'Integration' assumes one is building on to whatever is already there and has some type of linkages to both internal and external programs and services. These two concepts of co-ordination and integration are the most crucial aspects of any approach to a Youth Policy that may be considered for Australia. They are the most neglected and least debated aspects. Few recognise that different levels of co-ordination are necessary.

The issue of a Youth Policy is not new: operators and researchers from this country have been observing, experiencing and reading about overseas Youth Policies and programs for seven years or more. It is to be hoped that current interest will result in some meaningful action of sufficient strength and direction before the next 'peak' in the 15-19 year age group,

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** The views expressed are the responsibility of the author and are not necessarily the views of TAFE, New South Wales.

expected later this decade. More immediately, nearly 200,000 unemployed young Australians would gain direct benefit.

There has been a tendency to sit back and see what is developing overseas rather than to develop an Australian approach. It is a hesitation we can no longer afford. As general unemployment passed 10 per cent early in 1983, youth unemployment was nearly 30 per cent - a figure previously only touched by Aborigines. The length of unemployment for young people, already at an average of 32 weeks in the early 1980s, can be expected to rise sharply.

As far as the school leaver component of unemployed youth is concerned, the total of 50,000 out of 250,000 who annually would have difficulty entering work or study in the early 1980s is now conservatively estimated by 'operators' to be around 100,000. By the time this article is published we will be within three months of another 100,000 joining the ranks of the unemployed. No longer are 'the bottom 20 per cent' exclusively the early school leavers, the less able or those whose employment prospects have always been poor. The bottom 20 per cent, formerly a reality, is now a concept referring to the bottom half of the bottom 40 per cent.

In the delivery process the 'identifiers' (i.e. age and length of unemployment) no longer ensure that the early school leaver, the less able and those whose employment prospects have always been poor form the exclusive target group. Nor do these cliches necessarily describe the bulk of the longer-term unemployed. The process of identification in these terms is relatively less clear.

Youth Policy is meaningless unless it is converted into real programs and services that meet the desired objective. Although OECD and EEC experience with Youth Policies is relatively well known, especially to those with access to 'in-house' discussion papers, the lack of an Australian focus is of particular concern. What works best for whom and in what quantity and mix is the least answered of all the questions. Perhaps as in many overseas countries it is a question that only experience and the willingness to experiment can answer. Above all else there is an assumption in most debates that in Australia there is the machinery to deliver whatever it is we may eventually decide we want to implement.

Perhaps one OECD inspired phrase that there '... now exists a complex range of overlapping, sometimes conflicting and often short-term schemes designed by various educational and/or labour authorities...' is an apt description of the Australian scene. Some would way it also identifies the major protagonists. One could also add that it answers the question of Why Youth? raised in the earlier part of this paper. With an annual expenditure of the order of $500-700m. the taxpayer may well demand an answer.

If I remember the OECD document correctly, it goes on to argue that more comprehensiveness and co-ordination may therefore be necessary. This does not imply replacing the different programs available to youth. Rather it raises the question whether the various options currently available need to be interrelated and, to go further, integrated so as to provide a commitment to offer every young person education, training, work experience, temporary employment or combinations of these relevant to their needs.

Whether it is called Youth Policy or not; whether Government embraces Youth Policy or not, I believe there is a case to present better co-ordinated, integrated programs for young people and in particular for unemployed young people.

Characteristics and Objectives of Youth Policies

Put simply, the origins of overseas Youth Policies can be found in the mix of Education, Training and Employment Programs directed at the problem of youth unemployment. The objective of most programs is that in a given period of time, usually one year, all school leavers will be offered an opportunity - work, study or training place - which they may accept or reject. Programs are offered at the post-school level as a distinct and necessary part of the education and employment provision. These are the same countries which have the school retention rates of which we are so envious. The objective that all school leavers will be offered an opportunity within one year is achieved by none of the overseas countries which embrace it. Merrilees (1983) points out this is due mainly to budget constraints in a recessed international economy. However, all have sought to extend their 'comprehensiveness' by developing broader-based related policies and co-ordination.

The Youth Task Group Report (1982) describes the process of transforming what is available into a comprehensive scheme:

> [it] is not a problem of creating, designing and launching something entirely new, untested or unproven ... the task is one of taking what is relevant from the present and making it available more widely. It is a problem not just of content but of delivery, and what has to be delivered is both quantity and quality.

The abovementioned report, the culmination of nearly five years of seeking co-ordinated delivery, also adds that such a scheme

> ... implies clear targets which all concerned agree ... renewed efforts by employers, local authorities, local education authorities (including schools, colleges, Careers Service), Youth Service, voluntary organisations and many others, backed by full support from the trade union movement and those living and working in local communities.

I was clinging firmly to such ideals earlier this year when at a major education conference in Sydney I witnessed what now seems to me to be the perennial and mandatory debate between educationists and employers. At the conclusion of this contest I turned to the keynote speaker from the U.K. and enquired whether this was also going on in the U.K. He replied 'No. It has not done so for 10 years, and certainly with not the same degree of maliciousness'. The keynote speaker from the USA concurred.

Overseas Youth Policies have largely been implemented:

. after an extended period of seeking better co-ordinated programs

- after a National Review of all programs and services
- with a focus on Youth Unemployment/Employment
- involving Education, Training and Employment based programs
- with a written framework - a dynamic policy - in which the objectives, means and relationships within and across all programs are clearly specified
- with a firm resolve and representation from all parties involved - Government, Unions and Employers - that co-ordination would be made to work
- with frequently updated reviews of the development and progress of the agreed program.

It should be noted also that the policies have been supplemented by considerable technical assistance and specific purpose funding.

Co-ordination in these programs has several major facets:

- Policy: the development of complementary objectives which collectively address the individual's needs
- Planning: the design of structured relationships and linkages enabling progression through programs
- Administration: the establishment of complementary operational procedures and practices
- Programming: the ongoing delivery of meaningful services and programs providing ready access.

Youth Policy - in the Australian Context

There are two basic premises from which I start:

- There is no one response to the problem of unemployed youth that has been so successful that it requires the immediate attention of Government over and above all other responses
- Co-ordination at National, State and local level, or rather the lack of it, is the major problem facing the delivery of any meaningful program for the unemployed in Australia.

Programs to assist unemployed young people have now been in operation in this country since the mid-1970s. The major programs for unemployed young people include the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS); the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP); the Transition Program (SWTP) and more recently the Community Employment Program (CEP). As well there are a number of significant State-based programs involving community activity: co-operatives and various self-help job-seeker programs. There are also programs such as the Experimental Training Program for Unemployed Youth (ETP) which to a large extent duplicates what is already available. The administration behind these programs is even more complex. Perhaps more remarkable is the fact that most programs are focused on the same target group, with identical objectives and common delivery mechanisms.

It should be noted that each individual program has achieved its own

notable successes. Tentative bridges between programs are beginning to develop but are restricted in doing so because each scheme is administered separately on different funding cycles and with separate forward planning machinery.

The N.S.W. TAFE Transition Program, though not perfect, remains one of the few - perhaps the only - program for unemployed young people in Australia which requires

- the joint signatures of TAFE Principals and CES managers in consultation with the community at the proposal stage
- the availability of other programs for unemployed youth in any given area to be taken into account
- an integrated proposal to be developed.

Details of this approach are discussed in the document the N.S.W. TAFE Transition Program: Report on Development since 1980 - the Immediate Future (1983).

There is a growing concern that the recently announced Community Employment Program (CEP) and to a lesser extent the Experimental Training Program for Unemployed Youth (ETP) should be introduced as one component of the wider educational and manpower policies on some co-ordinated basis. Early indications are that this is not happening. Decisions about the future of all current programs for post-school young people are once more destined to be determined by a review to occur sometime in the future. At the same time, new programs costing several hundred million dollars to be delivered to the same target group as existing programs are being introduced.

Perhaps the most notable feature of all Australian programs is their 'sameness'. It is a useful exercise to compare the objectives of all programs. The element of competitiveness between programs - I have often referred to it as '... that warm body, who is unemployed, about to be descended upon and held captive by one group or another, irrespective of the individual's need, because of the rush for numbers in the next round of funding' - is about to receive a further shot in the arm.

The right approach of an immediate review of all programs at the Federal and State level to assess their effectiveness and a framework for adequate co-ordination may still be possible. This need not require the imprimatur of an OECD review which has both strengths and limitations.

As far as co-ordination is concerned perhaps it would be a relatively simple matter to disband all present Federal, State and local Committees and replace them with one committee at Federal, State and local level common to all programs. The major protagonists along with other necessary representatives would at least be required to operate through the same machinery. The above suggestion is not meant as a light-hearted remark. The writer has served on State CYSS Committee(s), Transition Co-ordinating Committee(s) and has had responsibility for SYETP and other Commonwealth Programs at a State level. This recommendation anticipates a trend which may be occurring anyway through the participation of individuals across a range of programs and the slow but continued development of local 'task force' groups.

To sum up, it is essential that the problem of post-school youth should not be seen as the amassing of opportunities for one authority or another. Rather attention needs to be focused on the question of the qualitative management of programs: co-ordination, relationships, and the links between different kinds of opportunities and individual needs. Perhaps individual students will in the future be spared the fourteen or so individual pieces of paper they are presently required to complete before entering and being paid on one program or another or moving from one program to another - but then, rhetoric is fine: delivery is another thing!

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IN SUMMARY AND EXTRAPOLATION

by

C. Blakers[*]

The Need for a Youth Policy

It has come to be widely accepted that Australia will not soon - or perhaps ever - regain the happy state of near full employment which it enjoyed as 'the lucky country' in the thirty years after the war. This society, like most others in the Western world, is in the process of social and industrial change as fundamental and far-reaching as was the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. Not only employment opportunities are changing; so also are patterns of and attitudes to work, and these, in turn, are part of quite dramatic changes in social attitudes, behaviours and patterns.

The society itself is in a betwixt and between situation. Having left the security and certainties of the post-war period, it is still groping towards whatever stability may emerge from the impact of technology on occupations and living. Young people are caught in this social transition. Their expectations, self-concepts and self-esteem have been formed by a process which began in their earliest years, shaped by schooling and family background, and by the influences and pressures transmitted through family, peers, the examples of community elders and, not least, the media. In this process, work - the getting of a paid job - has been the yardstick for judgement of the individual by the society and, even more importantly, by him or her self.

Many research studies (including that reported on here in Paper 4) have shown how well imbued with the 'work ethic' are most young people. Tiggemann and Winefield, in Paper 4, comment that 'adolescence is an important time for establishing independence and consolidating a sense of personal identity, and one way of achieving this is through employment'. Their longitudinal study shows the effects of both paid employment and unemployment on the self-esteem and emotional wellbeing of young people. 'For these young people, getting a job is still the 'normal' and desired option in our society', and 'it may be that if the opportunities provided by a job are denied for a sufficiently long period of time, these ill-effects (loss of self-esteem and depression) will persist and eventuate in permanent psychological damage'.

Yet recorded youth unemployment is reaching levels of almost thirty per cent and this is by no means the full tally. Stricker and Sheehan (A41) estimate that 'at least 10 per cent of enrolments aged 15 and 16 years, and perhaps many more, is to be ascribed to the depressed labour market for these age groups' (p.197). Neither of these measures fully documents teenage unemployment. Sweet, in Paper 3, identifies some aspects of the teenage labour market 'which distinguish it from adult labour markets' and which help to make ABS labour force surveys inadequate as a measure of what is happening to teenagers; in particular to those who are

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in neither full-time education or full-time employment. He estimates these to number 81,800 (in May 1981), 'nearly as many again as those officially regarded as unemployed (88,200)'. Of this group, 9,400 in May 1981 were studying part-time and 32,400 working part-time in jobs which are generally very brief, poorly paid, seasonal, casual, irregular, 'carrying no associated training and no promotion prospects'.

This leaves another '40,100 with no attachment to either education or the labour force, of whom 83 per cent were teenage girls'. These teenagers 'are in effect in limbo'. They have fallen through whatever social safety nets are provided for either young people or adults. They have neither role nor value in the society. Presdee's research (B67) indicates something of their plight and their feelings.

Research such as that by Wingfield, Tiggemann and Delin shows the individual costs of youth unemployment. There are social costs also, as Paper 4 points out: 'Links have been suggested between unemployment and a variety of societal ills, including drug-taking and crime'. Australia is not the only country to be concerned at the rising levels of teenage crime, but the trends are perhaps less well documented and their causes researched here than elsewhere. The link between unemployment and youth homelessness has however been clearly made by the recent evaluation report on the Youth Services Scheme (83/C:49) which is discussed by McDermott in Paper 9.

Hidden in our social statistics is a two-fold cost to the society of sustained youth unemployment. There are the financial costs involved not only in direct welfare payments but also in the services needed to deal with associated health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, suicide and crime. These are not normally measured in the costings of unemployment.

The second type of cost is the longer term and immeasurable cost to the character and quality of the society. The picture which has been emerging from research and analysis in recent years is one of a very high proportion of teenagers who have no place or value in the view of the society - or in their own eyes. As Clohesy comments: 'The land of the fair go is not their land'. Even if general levels of unemployment fall, high levels of youth unemployment are likely to continue. To a great many young people, the society will be unable to offer a job at all and to a great many more it will be unable to offer a job which is satisfying and developmental.

Disraeli in the nineteenth century wrote of the two nations of England: the rulers and the common people. Australia, like many other countries, is faced with the prospect of dividing into two nations: the employed and the unemployed; and the gulf between them is likely to be deeper than merely money. On one side will be those who have a valued place in the society and on the other, those who have not.

These are some of the considerations which lead inevitably to consideration of a youth policy - just as consideration of a youth policy should, and is likely to, lead to a deeper understanding of the needs of other social groups. The society may well, as Wilenski comments (83/AB:69) feel a particular responsibility for its young. But young people are a part of the society now and they will be the society of the future. They are bound to their social environment as any living organism is bound to

its natural environment. Their needs are wide-ranging and inter-linked, but they are also linked with the needs of other groups in the society. Policies affecting one aspect of need have implications for and effects on other aspects of need. Policies affecting one group in the community have implications for and effects on other groups in the community. Evidence is accumulating that the young unemployed belong to families who are themselves suffering unemployment.

As Clohesy says, 'youth policy is a component of social policy'.

The Scope of a Youth Policy

The wide-ranging nature of a comprehensive youth policy is emphasised in many of the papers in this Review. Shears and Matthews (Paper 1) make the point that a youth policy goes far beyond the functional areas of education, training and employment:

> The central question for youth policy is how to provide a framework of policy and action within which 15-19 year olds will be enabled to participate effectively in society, use their time constructively, explore and develop social relationships, and achieve a successful transition into the workforce and into adult roles generally.

Clohesy (Paper 2) and Baker (Paper 10) indicate the range of issues touched by a Youth Policy. They include, in addition to education, training and employment, questions of income support, health, recreation, accommodation, transport and law. Shears and Matthews in Paper 1 amplify the range of services which young people are likely to need in what is 'a crucial and vulnerable stage of their development' and go on to suggest the establishment of Youth Complexes as a means of delivering such services.

The Implications for Policy-Making

Taken together, the ten papers in this Review indicate the range, complexity and inter-relatedness of the issues involved in any approach to a comprehensive youth policy. Thus, the task of devising and implementing a Youth Policy is different in essence from most policy and decision-making undertaken outside wartime. It is comparatively straightforward to develop policies for one aspect of social welfare or one sector of education, taking no account of implications for and/or contradictions with other policies in other areas. Youth Policy, in that it cuts across so many areas of living and decision-making, presents a need for co-ordination and co-operation of the kind exacted in the past only by the exigencies of the wartime situation. There is the same need for clear goals, commonly accepted; for agreed priorities and directions; for will to achieve the common end; for co-operation in and co-ordination of effort; for the bringing together of a variety of perspectives and expertise from all sectors of the society and levels of government and management.

Yet Australian structures and processes - whether in research or

policy-making or action - are ill-devised and equipped to produce comprehensive views of and approaches to problems and needs. Research in general (though there are some exceptions) takes a partial view through the eyes of the economist, the educator, the sociologist, the psychologist, the historian, the anthropologist. Most academic institutions are based on these divisions of interest and expertise. This might not matter so much if policy-makers were able to put together the discrete perspectives so as to form a reasonably coherent whole. But governmental decision-making is just as compartmentalised in its own way. The comprehensiveness and coherence of decision-making are apt to give way to institutional demesnes, responsibilities, rivalries and narrow sectional interests. Henderson (83/AB:66) instances the classic reply: 'That's a different section of the department' (p.32). The result is often piecemeal, ad hoc and sometimes contrary policies and measures, addressed to particular symptoms or issues and taking little account of underlying causes and relationships.

All of these papers, implicitly or explicitly, hammer the need for co-ordination in policy-making and in action. This involves developing a complex system of relationships involving co-operation between

- different sectors: government, private (employers and unions), community (non-government organisations concerned with welfare and young people)
- different levels of government: local, regional, State and national
- different areas of responsibility within government at each level, including employment, education, social welfare and youth affairs.

Shears and Matthews in Paper 1 and Clohesy in Paper 2 make the obvious - but often neglected - point that at all levels of policy and action, young people themselves must participate. They are not passive beneficiaries to whom 'good' must be done; they are active and responsible partners in their own development and welfare - and in that of the society as a whole.

The consequences of unco-ordinated policies and programs are commented on in many of the papers. Shears and Matthews (Paper 1) discuss 'the ad hoc nature of federal and State initiatives and the separate requirements of the funding departments at State and Federal levels', which make co-ordinated action difficult. Baker, in Paper 10, quotes an OECD comment on the 'complex range of overlapping, sometimes conflicting and often short-term schemes designed by various educational and/or labour authorities', and finds it an apt description of the Australian scene. He draws attention also to 'the element of competitiveness between programs' for possession of the 'warm body' of the unemployed young person to swell the numbers for a particular program in the rush for the next round of funding.

Hughes mentions the irrationality of youth allowances of various kinds (Paper 5) and Edwards (Paper 8) details the different 'forms of financial assistance to young people, each with its own set of conditions', and the sometimes unintended consequences of these - as, for example, the effect on education participation.

Co-ordination is not merely a matter of providing structures and

processes which encourage co-operative effort, though these are an important basis; it is, fundamentally, a matter of generating a greater degree of mutual understanding and respect among all those involved at any level and in any way. Baker (Paper 10) illustrates, for example, the perennial debate between educationists and employers. The consequences of a community lack of understanding of the capacities and limitations of schooling are discussed by Hughes (Paper 5), making the point 'that secondary education has been seen as a substitute for a broad youth policy' rather than as a component in such a policy and a contribution to its implementation.

Even within education, however, co-ordination and co-operation are not exactly driving forces. Anderson (Paper 6) indicates how tertiary education, pursuing its own necessities and policies, might undermine the intentions of a youth policy. Australian education, throughout its development, has been marked by chasms, formed by mutual incomprehension, non-contact and, sometimes, suspicion and disdain. And this applies as much to the gap between pre-school and infant school, and between primary school and secondary school as it does to the gaps between secondary schools and TAFE and between TAFE and the CAEs and universities.

Some efforts at bridging the gap have been made in recent years in some places and at some levels, and the Transition Program, as Baker points out, has begun to contribute to this process. But if co-ordination cannot be achieved in one component of a youth policy - education - there would seem to be poor chance for a comprehensive Youth Policy which must span so many different areas.

Towards a Youth Policy

. Co-ordination and Co-operation

Given that co-ordination and co-operation are essential requirements for devising and implementing a youth policy, many of the papers in this series have practical steps to offer for consideration. Shears and Matthews outline a framework for action in the shape of 'interrelated co-ordinating committees transcending the boundaries of the various departments and agencies responsible for isolated functions relating to youth', and describe the functions of these national and other level committees. Baker (Paper 10) lists the essential steps which should precede development of a Youth Policy and discusses the major facets of co-ordination: policy, planning, administration and programs/delivery. He suggests that the present collection of different committees at federal, State and local levels - each of them concerned with and limited to particular programs or areas of responsibility - might with benefit be replaced by one committee at each level, so that all agencies 'would at least be required to operate through the same machinery'.

Clohesy emphasises the importance of the local base as 'the initial point from which young people and communities can enact strategies for action'. Thus, the structures and processes of co-ordination should be such as to reflect the complementary (not conflicting) roles of the various levels of government and decision-making. Each level has a different and important part to play; but in Australia, where traditions of local government have never been as strong as in some other countries,

the contribution that local communities can make to both the development and the implementation of policies has largely been overlooked. Like young people, local communities have commonly been expected to be passive recipients at the end of the chain of decision-making.

To bring about changes in structures and processes requires a long-term commitment to changing attitudes, and the patience to see it through. The Economic Summit Conference in April this year was a first step in a process of bringing people together, in the economic area. A Conference of Ministers concerned with young people proposed for later this year might constitute a beginning in the area of Youth Policy. And perhaps consideration could then be given to some highly mixed workshops, conferences - even 'in-service' courses - which would bring together a variety of involved persons to explain their own viewpoints and understand those put by others.

. Information

Adequate and accurate information is an essential requirement for sensible policies and action at any level. Sweet, in Paper 3, identifies a particular inadequacy in statistical information - to add to the many others collected by the Clearinghouse when these have been identified in analytical papers and research studies. These gaps in information apply across a wide range of issues and include both statistical information and basic research. Particularly lacking are longitudinal studies which can provide the insights and knowledge of developments which neither short-term projects nor 'number-crunching' exercises can do. The study by Winefield, Tiggemann and Delin (Paper 4) is one of the few such studies presently available to policy-makers and others in the important area of youth unemployment.

To be useful, however, information must be disseminated and exchanged. There needs first to be a willingness to communicate or at least to make available all relevant information - unless there are positive and well-based reasons for not doing so. And the information needs to be communicated in a way which is understandable. As Clohesy points out: 'The codes which inhibit the exchange of information must be broken ... the challenge is to make both language and concepts accessible'. It is timely to recall that in 1976 the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration (chaired by H.C. Coombs) had this to say:

> The Commission's firm conclusion on the question of access to and use of government information is that every reasonable attempt should be made to provide access to the community generally and, in particular, to interested community groups, to information which until now has been the privileged possession of public servants (p.144)

It recommended a variety of action 'to break down the "we-they" attitude and encourage active and constructive interest by the community generally in the work of government' - not only 'interest' but also participation.

. Education

The need for greater co-ordination among the various levels of education has already been mentioned. Hughes in Paper 5 identifies some of the problems of secondary education and suggests that solutions develop at the school level, but only as a result of wide co-operation: between schools and their communities and parents; schools and central

administrations; schools and tertiary institutions - all of these involving students, teachers, parents, administrators, specialist consultants and researchers.

Anderson in Paper 6 discusses the part that higher education could play in either contributing to or causing problems for the implementation of a youth policy, and notes that extension of places in higher education will not alone ensure that disadvantaged groups are able to participate. 'There will need to be positive discrimination as well as expansion of the secondary and tertiary sectors'.

. Youth Allowances

Many people during the last few years have pointed out the anomalies, inconsistencies and contradictions of current youth allowances and support schemes and thse are evident in the discussion and listings of Paper 8. For the first time, there is beginning a serious exploration of the whole issue of income support and allowances for young people. Papers 7, 8 and 9 in this Review consider the questions in some detail (see also Abstracts 83/AB:67-71).

In Paper 7, Ironmonger argues for a guaranteed minimum income for all young people not in full-time employment. His proposal would appear to be the first practical working out of the operation and probable costs of such a youth allowance and it represents a considerable contribution to thinking about the question. McDermott, in Paper 9, emphasises that any youth allowance must recognise the growing problem of youth homelessness and make adequate provision for those who choose or need to live independently of their families.

Edwards, in Paper 8, details the range of payments presently available and discusses their implications and effects, before going on to put together in a logical sequence the value and policy questions which must be answered before a Youth Policy can be seriously considered. The questions she asks are difficult ones involving as they do clear concepts of social goals and priorities. Most difficult of all are the questions: 'Why Youth?' '... indeed why not a guaranteed income for all?'.

And why not, indeed? Is our society so poor that it must deny security of means and dignity of place to a significant and growing proportion of its people? It may well be, as Clohesy says, that a Youth Policy will be a means of contributing 'to broad social changes which ensure equality, justice and development for all'.